

BRITISH AND GERMAN IDEALS

THE MEANING OF THE WAR

(These articles are reprinted from the September, 1914, and March, 1915, numbers of **THE ROUND TABLE**, a Quarterly Review of the Politics of the British Empire)

- I. The Schism of Europe
- II. Germany and the Prussian Spirit
- III. The Austro-Serbian Dispute

THE SCHISM OF EUROPE

I. GERMANY AT THE CROSS ROADS

MANY thousands of books and pamphlets have been written about the great war, describing its origins and the ideals which underlie it. But few of them have arrived at the fundamental truth. This war is the result of the rejection of democracy by Germany and Austria in the years 1848-1870, and its bitterness is due to the fact that two irreconcilable principles, autocracy and democracy, are struggling for supremacy in Europe to-day. It is the purpose of this article to show how autocracy triumphed in those years, how it has steadily corrupted the political sense of the German nation ever since, and how under its baneful influence the rulers and people of Germany have been driven to attempt to establish its predominance over a free Europe by force of arms.

It is not possible to trace in detail the history of those tragic years from 1848 to 1870, when reaction triumphed and democracy failed. It will suffice to recall that in 1848 a national assembly of Germany, elected by popular vote, with one member elected for each 500,000 of the population, drew up a Grundrecht for a German union. This fundamental law was conceived on noble lines. Germany was to become a true federation. The thirty-six separate States were to retain local self-government, but there was to be a federal government, superior to them all, to which every German citizen was to owe primary allegiance. The individual citizen was to be guaranteed those rights which the British citizen had won long before in the struggles over Magna Charta, the Habeas Corpus Act, and during the Great Rebellion, and which were eventually embodied in the Bill of Rights of 1688. These elementary constitu-

The Schism of Europe

tional rights no German then possessed or now possesses. The Grundrecht went on to provide, that though the citizen was bound to serve his country in arms, he was also to have freedom of speech, freedom of public meeting, freedom of the Press, and his person was to be secure from arrest except under legal warrant. Finally it declared that every State was to be governed according to the principles of popular representation, and that ministers were to be responsible to Parliament and not to the King. Germany was to become a true democratic federation of the German peoples.

This plan, nobly conceived, was rejected by the "princes and statesmen with golden stars upon their callous breasts." Twelve years later, Germany was united in another way. Trampling the Prussian Constitution of 1847 underfoot, Bismarck for four years governed Prussia in the teeth of violent popular opposition, until he had forged an army of strength sufficient for his purpose. Then in three wars he seized Schleswig-Holstein, cast Austria out of Germany, conquered France and was able to impose union on Germany on his own terms. Bismarck's constitution was very different from the liberal and democratic Grundrecht of 1848. It was based on the two chief articles of Bismarck's faith, the prerogative of the monarch and the ascendancy of Prussia. The constitution was drafted by no elected assembly. It contained no references to liberty of speech or person. It was promulgated on the authority of the Emperor, after consultation with his fellow monarchs, and was granted not as a right but as an act of grace. Power in united Germany was vested in the hereditary rulers by the grace of God, and not in Parliaments representing the will of the people. The true executive authority under the constitution was the Bundesrath, a secret council of Empire composed of the nominated ministers of the German Princes and Kings, and possessing legislative and executive functions. The Chancellor and his subordinates were responsible not to the Reichstag but to the Emperor, and when they appeared in the Reichstag, they came there simply as spokesmen of the Bundesrath, incapable of changing the policy of the Government on their own authority. The Reichstag itself could only criticize, amend or

Germany at the Cross Roads

veto bills, and refuse its assent to new taxes. It was, however, to be elected by universal suffrage of all males over twenty-five. This concession to democratic principles and to non-Prussian Germany Bismarck justified as follows:

“Direct election and universal suffrage I consider to be greater guarantees of conservative action than any artificial electoral law. . . . Universal suffrage, doing away as it does with the influence of the Liberal bourgeoisie, leads to monarchical elections.”

The real power in the new Empire resided in Prussia. The King of Prussia was the German Emperor and had control of the army. In his capacity as Emperor, he nominated the Chancellor, who was also Prussia's chief representative on the Bundesrath; and the Chancellor was the executive officer of the Empire. Prussia and its King had thus entire control of the federal machinery of government, the princes and the people of the rest of Germany having little opportunity for more than criticism and influence. Moreover, the constitution was so contrived that it was almost unassailable. Only by a complete revision of the whole fabric of the German Empire, from top to bottom, including the relations of the States to one another and the system of government in Prussia itself, could the Government be made responsible to the people instead of to the King.

In this manner was the problem of German unity solved. But in failing to unite themselves the German people paid the inevitable price. They did not obtain self-government and to this day they have remained subject to an autocratic government which they can influence, but not control. And they were all brought—South Germans and North Germans alike—within the influence of the Prussian system of government with its belief in force as the mainspring both of internal and external policy, and its doctrine that the duty of the citizens is to obey and not to control the government. From the triumph of the Prussian autocracy all subsequent trouble has come. It is well, therefore, before going on to trace the course of German policy since 1870, to examine briefly what the Prussian system was.

The Schism of Europe

Prussia was the typical monarchical military State—at the opposite pole from the modern democratic State. All power centred in the Government, and the Government was the king and the nobles backed by the army. The people were regarded, not as ends in themselves, but as beings to be drilled, disciplined and manœuvred into obedience to the will of the governing class. They were taught to obey the laws, not because they had a share in framing them, and because the laws then represented the general will, but because the laws were the commands of a power divinely authorized, and because disobedience would meet with condign and instant punishment inflicted by irresistible power. The virtues of the citizen of the democratic State were anathema in Prussia. Independence, self-reliance, private judgment in politics, a sense of responsibility for the national policy, and criticism of the authorities, which are the very life's breath of popular government, were frowned on and repressed. The Prussian virtues were obedience, loyalty and self-sacrifice to the command of the king and the higher powers, without question or hesitation, and these virtues it was the studied purpose of the State to instil into the people from their earliest years. It was Frederick the Great who inaugurated the system of universal compulsory military service and of universal compulsory attendance at school, largely with this end in view. It has always been a leading feature of military and school discipline in Prussia to cultivate the instinctive habit of unquestioning obedience to authority in children and recruits. This system, while it produced great virtues, a simple loyalty to the Crown, and a wonderful courage and self-sacrifice in war, inevitably tended also to undermine initiative and self-reliance in the people.

Bismarck derived his political ideas from Prussia. Hence the system of government he imposed on Germany was marred by two inseparable evils. It gave almost absolute power—under the specious form of a democratic constitution—to a small aristocratic group, and in order to ensure the ascendancy of that group it deliberately discouraged political independence and self-reliance in the people, so that they should neither reject the policy of their rulers, nor take the control of the national affairs into their own

Germany at the Cross Roads

hands. And this system is still in force to-day. The constitution is unchanged. Despite all the debates in the Reichstag the same classes hold power in Germany now as held it in 1871. And the docility of the people on which their ascendancy depends is maintained still by the four great engines which Bismarck contrived. Firstly by the educational system, which is state controlled from top to bottom. It is lavishly fostered by the government, but always on condition that it steadily inculcates the duties of political obedience and patriotism. Appointments are subject to government control, and criticism of the Government or open sympathy with democratic aims involves dismissal or the loss of all chance of promotion or preferment. "No one can make a successful career in the public service, and education is a public service, unless he is considered politically orthodox (*gesinnungstuchtig*), and orthodoxy does not simply mean abstention from damaging criticism or dangerous opinions; it means in practice deference to the opinions of those who 'know better,' that is to the clique of Prussian generals and bureaucrats, who, together with the Kaiser, control the policy of the country."* Secondly, it has been maintained by the army, which drills the majority of the male population into habits of discipline and of implicit and instinctive obedience to authority. Thirdly, there is the Press Bureau—a highly organized and powerful department for moulding public opinion in the direction required. It has a large clientele of newspapers, which know that they will not get their share of official information if they carry criticism of the government too far. One of its members once said: "It is as scientifically equipped and as highly organized a machine as the army itself, and it has over the army the advantage of being able to operate in time of peace." Finally, by means of the tariff, subsidies to shipping companies, preferential railway rates, and the vast system of insurance against sickness and unemployment, large sections of the community are made directly dependent upon the favour of the great bureaucratic machine. It cannot be too clearly realized that the Prussian system of government because it is autocratic in character, and based on the ascendancy of a particular class, distrusts the people and depends for its permanence on

* *War and Democracy*, p. 94.

The Schism of Europe

cajoling and coercing them. German policy since 1871 has aimed primarily at producing, not only the conscript soldier compelled to obey orders, but the conscript mind predisposed to acquiesce in the existing order, and taught to accept the authority of the Government as final and to regard criticism of it as unpatriotic.

II. THE IDEA OF ASCENDENCY

IN consequence, modern Germany is something different from both the older Germany of the Rhine and the South, which men still remember affectionately—the Germany of strenuous thought and great music, with its spectacled professors and pigtailed maidens, its mediaeval courts and castles—and the hard, unimaginative, puritanical Prussia, with its disciplined and orderly government and its simple unquestioning faith in the divine authority of the monarchical State. Modern Germany does not emerge for twenty years after the creation of the Empire. By that time Germany's rich heritage of thought, literature and music, and the political principles of the Prussian State had been fused into a complete national philosophy taught assiduously in every university and school, and ardently believed in by the mass of the German people.

The most conspicuous aspect of the new school of thought was a blind and uncritical belief in the superiority of the German race, and in the destiny of the autocratic Germanic State eventually to dominate the world by force of arms. The State, according to Treitschke and the dominant Prussian School, is an end in itself. "States," he says, "do not arise out of the peoples' sovereignty, but they are created against the will of the people." The State is something beyond the people. It "protects and embraces the life of the people, regulating it externally in all directions . . . It demands obedience." Hence the State stands superior to the laws of morality. "It will always," says Treitschke, "redound to the glory of Machiavelli that he has placed the State on a solid foundation, and that he has freed the State and its morality from the moral precepts taught by the Church, but especially because he has been

The Idea of Ascendency

the first to teach that the State is power." Thus to modern official Germany the State is a non-moral predatory organism, whose primary function is the acquisition of power in order that it may prevail in the struggle for existence with other States. The law of its being is not the law of truth, justice and honour, but the law that might is right. Hence the noblest duty of the subject is dedication and sacrifice to the will of the State, without criticism and without question, and the noblest function of the State is to express its power by domination, repression, conquest and war. This doctrine, so subversive of political morality and the true welfare of the community, is the inevitable outcome of the autocratic system. It is certain to arise where the government is a body of men distinct from the people and always in power, for they invariably come to regard their own power as the essence of the State and they attempt by every possible means to preserve their own privileged position and to persuade their subjects that it is unpatriotic, disloyal, and even impious to dispute their will.

The doctrine of winning ascendancy by force was also the traditional policy of Prussia. From its inception the Prussian State has been based on force. It was Christianized, not by the slower and more stable method of voluntary conversion, but by force. It was given unity by the forcible overthrow of the semi-independent knights and cities. It was by force that its boundaries were steadily and deliberately extended; by force that the German ascendancy over the Slavs was preserved; by force that internal order and unity were maintained—force applied through the army or the police at the sole discretion of the king. And war, the final triumph of the policy of force, had always been a familiar idea with Prussia. As Mirabeau said, "War is Prussia's national industry."

It is this doctrine of national ascendancy—a doctrine naturally attractive to the autocratic rulers of Germany and gradually accepted by a people politically demoralized by having no responsibility for public policy—which is the primary cause of the war. It permeates every act of official policy. It blinds Germany to the claims of justice and liberty when the rights and independence of other races or nations are involved. And it has driven her headlong into

The Schism of Europe

a policy which was bound to bring her into collision with those of her neighbours who valued their freedom and were strong enough to resist her will.

In domestic policy it became a government axiom that everything non-German was dangerous to the German State and had to be overcome, not by conciliation and compromise, but by force. This was the traditional policy of Prussia, and how far Prussian doctrines have corrupted the liberal Germany of the South is seen in the following lines about Poland, by a friendly biographer of Bismarck:

“Nothing shows the change which he [Bismarck] has been able to bring about in German thought better than the attitude of the nation towards Poland. In the old days the Germans recollected only that the partition of Poland had been a great crime, and it was their hope and determination that they might be able to make amends for it. In those days the Poles were to be found in every country in Europe, foremost in fighting on the barricades; they helped the Germans to fight for liberty, and the Germans were to help them to recover independence. In 1848 Mieroslawski had been carried like a triumphant hero through the streets of Berlin . . . At a time when poets still were political leaders, and the memory and influence of Byron had not been effaced, there was scarcely a German poet—Platen, Uhland, Heine, who had not stirred up enthusiasm for Poland. It was against this attitude of mind that Bismarck had to struggle, and he has done so successfully. He has taught that it is the duty of Germany to use all the power of the State for crushing and destroying the Polish language and nationality.”*

It is now the policy of official Germany not only to destroy the Polish language and nationality, but to drive the Poles from their country. In 1906 the children in the schools of Poland went on strike because compelled to have their religious instruction in German. Many of them were kept back at school and flogged. Parents were fined and imprisoned for withdrawing children during the hours of religious instruction. Children were also sent to reformatories on the ground that their parents in resisting the

* Headlam, *Life of Bismarck*, p. 175.

The Idea of Ascendency

decrees of the State had shown themselves incapable of taking proper care of them. In 1908 an Act was passed by the Prussian Diet, "as imperatively necessary in the highest interest of the State," providing for the compulsory expropriation of Polish landlords, since the system of the voluntary colonization of Prussian Poland by State-assisted German settlers had failed. The Poles were forbidden to build houses on expropriated land and when they lived on it in gipsy carts they were heavily fined. The Reichstag protested against this procedure in 1909, but was unable to affect the policy of the Government, whose final justification of its policy was the plea that "in political matters might goes before right." Bonuses were then given to postal officials who refused to deliver letters addressed in Polish, and Government officials who showed any sympathy for Polish grievances were dismissed. The Reichstag again protested, and again but two years ago, proved that it had no power, for the Government pursued its policy of forcible Germanization unmoved.

The same policy was pursued in Alsace and Lorraine, where more conciliatory methods might have been expected. For though these provinces had been taken from France by force, the people were mostly of German descent and had for long been part of the Holy Roman Empire. Instead, the only method which Prussia understands, that of Germanizing by force, was immediately inaugurated. The French language was proscribed, children could only be registered under German names, the public performance of the classical French drama was forbidden, and even the use of French words such as "coiffeur" and "nouveau-té," universal in trade and in common use in the rest of Germany, were forbidden in parts of Alsace-Lorraine under pain of police court penalties. Finally the Government attempted to take the heart out of the people by the constant parade of overwhelming military strength, thereby demonstrating the folly of resisting the German will and the wisdom of meekly submitting to superior force and becoming docile servants of the German State. The Zabern incident shows how the Prussian doctrine of forcible ascendancy has grown and not diminished in the last forty years. It is the same in the Danish parts of Schleswig-Holstein. In 1913 the Nor-

The Schism of Europe

wegian explorer, Ronald Amundsen, was prohibited from giving a lecture on his voyages in his own language, on the ground that Norwegian was so like Danish as to be dangerous. This prohibition was subsequently withdrawn by Berlin, but it shows the attitude of the administration towards its Danish subjects.

In foreign affairs the same doctrine of ascendancy gradually made itself felt. It was not that Germany coveted any particular possession of her neighbours. She had a bigger soul than that. It was that she wanted the first place. She was determined that sooner or later her word was to be the final word in all great questions of international policy, which none could gainsay because none could resist the German sword. Being no free State herself, she was, in fact, bent on destroying the freedom of her neighbours and making them also subordinate to the tyrannical will of her own rulers. For this ideal—the allurements of supreme power—the German people, taught and disciplined by their rulers, have been induced to make any sacrifices, and no demand for men, money or ships has ever been refused. It is this megalomania, originating in the belief in force and the will to power, encouraged by the political enslavement of the people and the absence of self-criticism which that involves, and fostered in every way by the chauvinist military and bureaucratic classes, which has been the main force behind German foreign-policy for the last twenty years.

III. GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY, 1870-1911

BY 1871 Bismarck had won for the German Empire an undisputed position of predominance in the councils of Europe. Skilfully isolating his enemies one by one, and then falling upon them at his own chosen moment, he had succeeded in uniting the Empire, and after 1871 he maintained his ascendancy by the same means. Throughout his chancellorship France was kept at the mercy of the German sword. In 1872 he formed the Drei-Kaiser-Bund for the mutual protection of the three autocratic monarchies of Russia, Austria and Germany. Seven years

later—when as the outcome of the Russo-Turkish war and the Berlin Conference of 1878, Austria-Hungary obtained the right of administering Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Russia went back empty handed—he was able to reunite Austria-Hungary to Germany in the Dual Alliance. Three years later again, by urging France in 1881 to occupy Tunis, which Italy had regarded as her own preserve, he succeeded in inducing Italy to join it too. Not content with the Triple Alliance, which was the only diplomatic combination in Europe at that time and immensely strong, Bismarck in 1884 entered into the famous secret reinsurance treaty with Russia, whereby the two powers guaranteed to 'remain neutral in the event of an attack by any other power.

Germany was thus absolutely predominant in Europe. But Bismarck, towards the end of his life, was a confirmed believer in peace and was able to convince his neighbours that Germany, strong though she was, had no overweening ambitions. She had therefore no enemies save France. Moreover, during the eighties, when, after the appalling revelations of the slave trade by Livingstone and Stanley, the process of partitioning Africa among the Great Powers was being carried through, Germany, though late in the field, obtained considerable dominions. She acquired German East Africa, German South-West Africa, Togoland and Cameroon. This provoked no opposition in England. Gladstone said:

“If Germany is to become a colonizing power, all I can say is, ‘God speed her.’ She becomes our ally and partner in the execution of the great purposes of Providence for the advantage of mankind. I hail her in entering upon that course, and glad will I be to find her associating with us in carrying the light of civilization and the blessings that depend upon it to the more backward and less significant regions of the world.”

In 1884 a conference was held in Berlin which regularized the partition of Africa among the Great Powers, defined boundaries, promulgated rules about effective occupation and originated phrases like “spheres of influence,” with a view to obviating the possibility of conflict or misunderstanding.

The Schism of Europe

With the accession of William II, however, a complete change came over the scene. Bismarck had, perhaps, grown too old to respond to the leaping pulse of new Germany. William II was determined to head a new movement whereby Germany should acquire the same position in world-politics which Bismarck had won for her in Europe. His action was decisive and dramatic. He came to the throne unexpectedly in 1888, a young man of 30, untried and almost unknown. He seized at once on the fundamental principles of the constitution and determined to profit by them. His first proclamation was to his army—the support of the royal power, and the foundation of autocratic Germany. He did not address his people till three days later. In the following year, despite the opposition of Bismarck, he went on his famous visit to the Sultan Abdul Hamid, which was the beginning of that connection between the ruling classes in Berlin and Constantinople which has borne fruit in the Bagdad Railway and in the Austrian policy of establishing her ascendancy in the Balkan peninsula. No sooner did he return to Germany than William II made up his mind to get rid of Bismarck. Bismarck in his old age was the almost undisputed autocrat of Germany. The Kaiser was no less bent on being the autocrat of Germany himself. The breach came on the question of power. Bismarck contended that he was the responsible Chancellor of the German Empire, and that so long as he retained the confidence of the Emperor, the views of other Ministers of State could only be conveyed to the monarch through the Chancellor himself. The Kaiser replied that he was German Emperor and as such could invite any of his subjects for advice. Neither side would give way and Bismarck finally tendered his resignation, which was instantly accepted. In the same month of March, 1890, the Kaiser declared "One only is master within the Empire and I will tolerate no other." "Those who are willing to help me in my endeavours are cordially welcome. Those who oppose me I will smash."

Ever since then the Kaiser has been the real ruler of Germany, making and discarding his ministers, as their policy diverged from his or became too unpopular, but ever remaining in office himself. At every crisis it is his will

which decides. And that he believes himself to be the ruler of Germany and that the duty of his subjects is to obey he is at no pains to disguise. "The King," he said, "is King by God's grace, therefore he is responsible only to the Lord." "I call to mind the moment when my grandfather, as King by the grace of God, took the crown in one hand and the Imperial sword in the other and gave honour to God alone and from Him took the crown." (Frankfurt, 1896.) This was no youthful outburst of dynastic enthusiasm, for less than five years ago, in 1910, he declared in a speech which raised much discussion in Germany, that his grandfather had

"placed by his own right the crown of the Kings of Prussia upon his head, once again laying stress upon the fact that it was conferred upon him by the grace of God alone, and not by Parliaments, meetings of the people, or popular decisions, and that he considered himself the chosen instrument of Heaven, and as such performed his duties as regent and as ruler."

The duty of obedience he insisted on, especially in his speeches to his army. Thus to recruits he said:

"Your duty is not easy: it demands of you self-control and self-denial—the two highest qualities of the Christian—also unlimited obedience, and submission to the will of your superiors. As I, Emperor and ruler, devote the whole of my action and ambitions to the Fatherland, so you must devote your whole life to me."

On another occasion he said to them: "There is but one law and that is my will."

The new Emperor at once announced that he was going to abandon the Bismarckian tradition and inaugurate a world policy instead of a European policy. "My course," he said, "is the right one and I shall follow it." He declared that Providence intended Germany to lead the world, and that Germany must assert her power and influence in every part. "We are the salt of the earth," and "I lead you to glorious times." The character of the new German

The Schism of Europe

policy was described by a German writer in the *Neue Rundschau* in 1913 as follows:—

“We have tried to carry out a world-policy, we have hustled about in every direction, we have dreamed dreams of boundless colonial expansion, and cherished deep in our hearts the belief that rivalry with England is the divinely ordained objective of our world political and commercial ambitions. Our foreign policy began to think in continents. . . . Our sea power grew fabulously and with it the claim—trumpeted thrice a day to all the winds—that henceforth no decision, whatever or whensoever it might be, should be taken without Germany’s directing and determining voice.”

These last words represent exactly the underlying principle of German foreign policy since 1890. It was expressed by the Emperor himself as follows: “Nothing must henceforth be settled in the world without the intervention of Germany and the German Emperor.” This attitude, the traditional attitude of Prussia, is the exact opposite of the attitude of modern democracies. It sees the world not as a great family of peoples struggling blindly yet with good will towards a better mutual understanding and ever engaged in perfecting the instruments for maintaining international peace. It views it as a terrible arena in which war is a “biological necessity” and in which the strongest power will eventually by superior force compel the rest to acknowledge that they are no longer free, but must, in the last resort, subordinate their wills to its will.

It did not take very long for the Emperor to realize that for foreign policy on Prussian lines to be successful in “Welt-politik” it needed the same instrument of force behind it which had made it so successful in European politics. Moreover, that force had in the nature of things to be naval and not military. At that time Germany had practically no navy, and therefore the Emperor and the apostles of the “new course” set to work to work up public opinion to support the idea. At first criticism was rife. Prussia—master of the land—distrusted the sea. The rest of Germany had as yet little enthusiasm for expansion. But the great engines for moulding public opinion were set in

motion, and the political docility induced by the Bismarckian system made the rest easy. Small beginnings were made, but in 1897 came the famous avowal which paved the way for the great Navy Bill of 1898. "I shall not," he said, "rest until I have brought my fleet to the same standard as my army." "The trident ought to be in our fist."

The decision to commence building a fleet, to number twenty battleships, twelve large and twenty-eight small cruisers within six years, was caused by certain occurrences in the Far East and South Africa. In 1894-5 war had broken out between China and Japan, in which Japan had been an immediate victor. Immediately afterwards Germany joined with Russia and France—it is said by the Japanese, on German initiative—to compel Japan to revise the treaty of Shimonoseki and surrender Port Arthur, which was subsequently leased under compulsion to Russia, while Germany occupied Kiao Chao (1897). This was a successful bluff, but it was not likely to be successful again unless Germany had some naval strength to bring to bear. Similarly with South Africa. The rulers of Germany saw in the growing difficulties between the Transvaal and British South Africa a chance of profit. Hopes of expansion in South Africa were in those days high. *Die Grenzboten*, one of the most influential German weeklies, wrote in 1897: "The possession of South Africa offers greater advantages in every respect than that of Brazil." Hence the independence of the Transvaal was declared to be a German interest, and President Kruger was encouraged in every way to resist those measures of internal reform which alone would pave the way to a peaceful settlement. It is not too much to say that but for German intrigues the constitutional and racial problems of South Africa, now so happily solved, might never have been decided on the field of battle. How great a part German promises played in President Kruger's mind may be seen from the following speech he made to Germans in Pretoria, "As a child grows up, it requires bigger clothes, the old ones will burst; and that is our position to-day. We are growing up, and although we are young, we feel that, if one nation tries to kick us, the other will try to stop it. . . . I feel sure that, when the time comes for the Republic to wear still larger clothes, you will

The Schism of Europe

have done much to bring it about.” When the opportunity, however, came after the deplorable Jameson raid, Germany, having no fleet, could do nothing save send a telegram congratulating the President on having repelled the raid “without invoking the aid of friendly powers.” Hence the Navy Act of 1908.

In the same year the Emperor struck out again towards the Near East. In the autumn he again paid a second visit to Constantinople, where he manifested the greatest cordiality towards the Sultan Abdul Hamid, though the whole world had recently been horrified by the Armenian atrocities. The Emperor then went on to Jerusalem, and at Damascus on November 7 proclaimed himself the protector not only of Turkey but of the whole Mohammedan world—a curious indication of the general trend of his ideas when it is remembered that he had not a single Moslem subject and that the immense majority of the Mohammedan peoples were citizens of the British and French Empires. The German ascendancy in Constantinople dates from this time, and its first fruits were seen in the Bagdad railway concession, finally signed in 1902 and known in Berlin as B.B.B. or Berlin Byzantium Bagdad.

Bismarck had watched the “new course” with dismay. His sagacious, if unscrupulous, mind saw the inevitable outcome of the reckless policy of interfering in other peoples’ affairs. He began, too, to realize the danger of the system he had created. In rejecting every proposal for enabling the people to share in the direction of public policy, he had omitted to consider what might happen when his old master died and he himself was dead or discarded. And now he realized that while he had created a machine of terrific power which could be absolutely controlled by a single man, the levers had fallen into the hands of an impulsive and ambitious ruler, more noted for his indiscretions than his wisdom. And he realized, also, that there was no method of removing the danger save a wholesale revolution in that constitution which gave the power to the Emperor, the leaders of the army, the bureaucrats and the junkers. He grew more and more depressed as time went on, when he saw how absolute was the power of the Emperor to change his ministers as he liked, how the military

The Anglo-French Entente, 1900-1905

party which he had always distrusted and kept at a distance, because of its blind chauvinism, was steadily increasing its hold on royal favour, how the position of diplomatic security he had won for Germany in Europe had already been undermined, while there were no compensating gains abroad, and how the policy of Germany, by tending towards Turkey and Asia Minor, was gradually being drawn into the endless racial struggles of the Balkan Peninsula. Bismarck was too old to change his fundamental beliefs, but, seeing whither systematized autocracy was leading, he made the remarkable avowal in his later years, "If I were not a Christian, I would be a Republican."

IV. THE ANGLO-FRENCH ENTENTE, 1900-1905

THE end foreseen by Bismarck was soon reached. The first result of his fall from power was the dropping of the reinsurance treaty with Russia. The Emperor and his minister, von Caprivi, regarded it as too "complicated." Their eyes, too, were set on world policy, not on Europe; and the Triple Alliance afforded Germany ample security at home. The next step was that France and Russia, alarmed by the new policy of Germany and recognizing their powerlessness against the Triple Alliance, began to negotiate for mutual security. By 1896 the Dual Alliance was an accomplished fact. France was no longer in defenceless isolation as against the Triple Alliance, and Russia was secured against aggression on her western flank, while she pursued colonization and expansion in Siberia. Ten years later England had deserted her traditional policy of "splendid isolation" from the complications of Europe, and had entered into an Entente with France. The steps by which the Anglo-French Entente came into being must be considered in detail, for on them depends the answer whether or not England has selfishly and deliberately hemmed Germany in.

The antagonism between England and Germany did not outwardly appear until the Boer war. The German Navy Bill of 1898 did not cause much comment in England, as Germany obviously needed a fleet to protect her interests overseas. The wave of Anglophobia, however, which swept

The Schism of Europe

over Germany during the Boer war, struck England with a shock of surprise. It was far more than the sympathy which most foreign nations—understanding little of the real issues—felt for the small republics gallantly standing up to an overwhelming foe. It was a feeling prompted at bottom by the sense of impotence. The effect of long teaching by Treitschke and other apostles of the “governmental” school had been to disparage the British Empire in German eyes. Having had no experience themselves of political liberty, they could not understand the impalpable influence which knit the British Commonwealth into a willing unity; they could not understand how the principle of liberty which animates the whole British Imperial system guaranteed peace, personal freedom, the reign of law, and an orderly progress towards self-government to every class of its members, civilized and uncivilized, coloured or white. To German eyes Britain had created the British Empire by the same means as Frederick the Great had created Prussia, and Prussia under Bismarck’s hand had created the German Empire, by ruthless use of war, waged for selfish ends whenever favourable opportunities occurred. To the Germans the foundation of all empire and dominion was force and nothing but force. According to this view Britain was the Colossus with the feet of clay, the most gigantic fraud of history. For the British seemed to expect to be allowed to preserve their great position, trusting to their past prestige and to their fortunate position as an island, while refusing to make even the sacrifice of universal compulsory service, which every European power had made for its own defence. They were manifestly an effete people, whose empire would collapse at the first touch of reality, and would tumble into the hands of the new dynamic race which was destined, by reason of its prowess in arms and its dedication to the national cause, to be master in the new century.

The Boer war raised all these feelings to fever heat. The war itself was but another example of British land-grabbing, and the long resistance of the Boer was final proof of British degeneration. Yet in this crisis, when the greatest and least worthy of the new empire’s rivals was at death-grips far away, Germany was powerless. The war broke out on October 11, 1899. On the 18th the Kaiser, in a public

The Anglo-French Entente, 1900-1905

speech, expressed public sentiment exactly when he said, "We are in bitter need of a strong German navy." The universal feeling was that such a thing must never happen again and that Germany must hurry on the creation of her navy as rapidly as possible. In 1900-1 the number of Navy League societies rose from 286 to 1,010, and the membership from 246,000 to 566,000. £50,000 was spent in propaganda, and in 1900, only two years after the first great Navy Law, a second was passed, providing for the creation of a fleet of thirty-eight battleships, fourteen large cruisers, thirty-eight small cruisers, and ninety-seven destroyers, all to be ready by 1917. The first law had merely authorized a fleet such as a great power like Germany certainly needed. The purpose of the second was clearly indicated in the preamble, which set forth that "Germany must have a fleet of such strength that a war against the mightiest power would involve risks threatening the supremacy of that power." Germany had definitely entered the list with a view of gaining the same position of ascendancy by sea that she already enjoyed on land.

The next years were a confused time in diplomacy. England, though perturbed by the Navy Laws, was extremely reluctant to abandon the policy of isolation. She was somewhat exhausted by the Boer war, and being entirely preoccupied with the manifold internal problems of her own empire, she entertained no projects of expansion. On the other hand, France and Russia were by long tradition hostile to England: Russia, because of a number of unsolved frontier questions in Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia; France, because of similar questions in Northern Africa—especially in Egypt. The Anglo-French quarrel had culminated in the Fashoda incident of 1898, when Colonel Marchand, by forced marches, tried to annex for France the upper waters of the Nile, directly after Lord Kitchener had overthrown the Khalifa at Omdurman in the Sudan. Accordingly, the proposal was originated—it is generally believed by Germany—that Russia, France and Germany should repeat the success they had won against Japan in 1895, by combining against England during the winter of 1899-1900. The combination, however, had not enough power by sea and the idea came to nothing. Then, in October, 1901, Ger-

The Schism of Europe

many, alarmed at the effect of her own action on English opinion, suggested tentatively an alliance with England, on the basis that each side should guarantee the possessions of the other in all parts of the world except Asia. The fact that such an alliance would commit England to guaranteeing the German occupation of Alsace-Lorraine, Posen and the Danish provinces, and might lead to obvious difficulties with the United States if Germany contemplated aggression in Brazil, would have foredoomed the proposal to failure. In any case the determination of the British Government to avoid definite commitments on the Continent of Europe caused it to be dropped almost at once. It was indeed doubtful if it was intended seriously by Germany at all.

At any rate, Germany turned back to France, and an attempt was made to arrive at an understanding on the basis of a partition of all the north coast of Africa, directed against England and concluded behind the back of England. But there was in France a strong party, headed by M. Delcassé, which distrusted the designs of Germany. As a Frenchman, quoted by Sir Valentine Chirol, remarked: "William II always offers to be your friend *against* somebody else. Otherwise your friendship has no value for him." M. Delcassé was in favour of an understanding with England, based upon a general settlement of all outstanding quarrels, which would pave the way for cordial relations and might eventually mature into an entente or an alliance if German foreign policy became, as it promised to become, even more menacing and aggressive.

This party prevailed, and on July 7, 1903, an interview took place between Lord Lansdowne, the British Foreign Secretary, and M. Delcassé, which led to the conclusion of the Anglo-French agreement of April 4, 1904. That agreement did no more than recognize the then existing facts of the situation in Africa. In the whole of that continent only three independent States remained—Abyssinia, Liberia and Morocco. All the rest of the continent was under the political tutelage of some European power. Morocco was surrounded on all sides by French territory, and English and French commerce were predominant there, while Spain had some political claims in the country. The agreement specified that while France recognized the predominant position

The Anglo-French Entente, 1900-1905

of the British in Egypt and the Sudan, the British recognized the predominant position of the French in Morocco. France declared that she had "no intention of altering the political status of Morocco;" England made the same declaration with regard to Egypt, and further agreed that it "appertained" to France to "preserve order" in Morocco, and "to provide assistance for the purpose of all administrative, economic, financial and military reforms which it may require." She also undertook "not to obstruct the action taken by France for this purpose." At the same time, as it appeared later, France entered into secret arrangements with Italy and Spain, guaranteeing to one a Spanish sphere in Morocco and to the other a free hand in Tripoli.

The news of the Anglo-French Agreement produced little comment in Germany. Prince Bülow, the Chancellor, speaking in the Reichstag on April 12th, 1904, said that on the whole Germany welcomed the Anglo-French understanding and that Germany's interests in Morocco were solely economic. But there was much chagrin in the German Foreign Office itself, which had hoped, by playing on French antipathy to England, to make an agreement favourable to Germany behind the back of England. It now found that France had obtained what she wanted without paying "compensation" to Germany, and, what was infinitely more disquieting, had made up her quarrel with England and paved the way for an entente which might eventually threaten Germany's domination over Europe by creating an equipoise to the Triple Alliance.

True to the Prussian tradition, the German Government made up its mind that there was only one method of dealing with the situation, to frighten France from her intentions by the threat of war. Accordingly, on March 31, 1905—a couple of weeks after the final defeat of Russia at Mukden had removed all danger on their Eastern frontier—the Kaiser suddenly landed at Tangier and declared that he visited the Sultan as an independent sovereign in whose lands all powers were to hold the same footing and enjoy the same rights. The protection of Morocco was the ostensible reason of the move. The true reason was exactly expressed by the German historian, Rachfahl: "because under the surface of the Morocco affair lurked the deepest and most

The Schism of Europe

difficult problems of power (*Macht-probleme*), it was to be foreseen that its course would prove to be a trial of strength of the first order." During the controversy which followed the Emperor's visit, Germany delivered a peremptory ultimatum to France. A special envoy, Prince Henckel von Donnersmarck, was sent to Paris. It was, he said, clear to the Imperial Government of Germany that the Anglo-French Entente had been framed to isolate and humiliate Germany. Was that the policy of France, or of her Minister? The policy of the Minister was aimed at Germany, who would not wait till it was completed. Let France think better of it, give up her Minister, and adopt towards Germany an open and loyal policy such as would guarantee peace—in other words, break off relations with England. France was not strong enough to resist Germany in arms, and M. Delcassé resigned.

This was the first instance of mailed-fist diplomacy in Europe for many years. It crystallized the growing fears about the domineering tendencies of German policy. For Germany, herself protected by the Triple Alliance, had threatened France with war at a time when France's ally, Russia, was powerless, unless by some dramatic act of humiliation she proved that she meant to change her policy and acknowledge that she would not pursue a foreign policy disapproved of by Germany. But so far from weakening the understanding between France and England, this incident immensely strengthened it. The Entente began to be a reality, and its foundation became a common determination to resist mailed-fist humiliation or military aggression by the central Powers. As to Morocco itself, it was agreed that the whole question should be submitted to an international conference, which met at Algeciras in 1906. The conference ended in an apparent victory, but a tacit defeat, for Germany. All the members, except the Austrian, including the representative of the United States, decided against the claims put forward by Germany. Finally the conference drew up an act providing for the future of Morocco "on the three-fold principles of the sovereignty and independence of H. M. the Sultan, the integrity of his dominions, and economic liberty without any inequality for the trade and commerce of all nations." At the same time, however, it was

Anglo-German Negotiations, 1906-9

recognized that France and Spain had the right to supervise the police in the eight treaty ports, and to enforce the ordinances about Customs and against the illicit importation of arms, which meant that in the event of internal disorder they would be the powers to intervene and restore order.

V. ANGLO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS, 1906-9

THE Morocco crisis was followed by a general election and the advent of the Liberal Party to power in England. A most determined effort was now made by the new Government to enter into friendly relations with Germany, stop the growing expenditure on armaments, and inaugurate an era of peace. The central idea of their policy was defined later on by Sir Edward Grey, when he said (November, 1911), "It is difficult to find a half-way house between constant liability to friction and cordial friendship. It is cordial friendship alone which provides sufficient mutual tolerance and good will to prevent difficulties and friction which would otherwise arise." The Liberal Government, in fact, put forward as the future basis of international relations in Europe the principle that nations should mutually respect one another's rights and territories, and that in order to maintain peace, they should endeavour to cultivate good relations all round, rather than range themselves in hostile military groups protected not by friendliness and goodwill, but by a common fear of the terrible consequences of war. This principle was advanced as the alternative to the traditional Prussian and Bismarckian idea that States were necessarily in eternal competition with one another and used diplomacy and alliances simply as means of profit or aggrandizement at the expense of their neighbours.

In two quarters the policy was successful. In 1907 an Agreement was signed with Russia whereby the old difficulties concerning the buffer States of Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia were roughly settled. Each side disclaimed aggressive intentions against these areas, and spheres of influence were delimited in Persia, which, so long as any form of stable government could be propped up in Teheran, would obviate trouble for the future. This agreement with Russia,

The Schism of Europe

unlike the spirit of the Entente with France, carried with it no suggestion of the possibility of common action in the event of German aggression, though it was facilitated by common apprehension of German designs. As Sir Edward Grey explained, its purpose was simply to remove causes of friction in frontier questions and so permit relations of friendliness instead of suspicion between the Governments of London and Petrograd. A similarly successful arrangement was also arrived at a few years later with the United States, whereby various ancient controversies about the Newfoundland Fisheries and boundary waters were amicably composed.

Negotiations were also opened with Germany; but as there were no minor matters at issue, they centred on the question of naval rivalry and the possibility of a diminution of expenditure on armaments. The second Hague Conference was due in 1907, and the Liberal Government thought that some simultaneous movement might be made towards disarmament and better international arrangements all round. Accordingly, in order to show that they were serious, and were not manœuvring to steal an advantage, and in order to prove to Germany that Great Britain had no intention of aggression against her or of hemming her in by an unbreakable wall of steel by land or sea, the Government announced that the British programme of new construction—known as the Cawdor programme—for the year 1907 would be reduced from 4 to 3 Dreadnoughts. Certain reductions were made at the same time in the army. The British overtures did not meet with much success, for, in 1906, the German naval programme, so far from being reduced, was increased by six fast cruisers, the general opinion in official circles being reflected by Count Reventlow, the well-known publicist, when he said: "The most that Germany could do would be to propose that England should so reduce her rate of construction as to allow the German navy to overtake the British. Once the two navies were equal, Germany would pledge herself not to increase her fleet further."

But the Liberal Government still persisted. On March 2, 1908, the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, wrote an open letter to the world urging the need of some

Anglo-German Negotiations, 1906-9

measure of disarmament in the interests of peace and civilization. And in order to prove the sincerity of their intentions the Government reduced the programme of naval construction for 1908 still further from the Cawdor standard by only laying down two Dreadnoughts instead of four. The answer of Germany was decisive. Germany made her attendance at the Hague Conference conditional on no motion being brought forward on the subject of disarmament, and in the following year (1908), after a successful "patriotic" general election, passed yet another new Navy Law adding four more Dreadnoughts to her programme and laying down no less than four in the current year. As the *Novoe Vremya* at Petrograd said: "This mania for armament really aims at the domination of the universe."

It was obvious that mere security could not be Germany's object, for nobody thought of attacking her or any of her possessions. Nor was colonial expansion the motive, for she had not made much use yet of her own colonies, and she had signed an agreement with England which gave her the major share of the Portuguese colonies, should Portugal collapse. Nor was it commercial reasons, for her prosperity and trade were increasing by giant strides. The real reason was the boundless ambition of the rulers of Germany, and their belief that Germany could eventually drive her neighbours to relinquish any claims to equality, and so dominate the policy of Europe by the superiority of her armaments and will to power. Their attitude was exactly expressed by the German Chancellor, Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, in March, 1911, when, in rejecting President Taft's proposals for arbitration, he said:

"When a people will not or cannot continue to spend enough on its armaments to be able to make its way in the world, then it falls back into the second rank and sinks down to the rôle of a 'super' on the world's stage. There will always be another and a stronger there who is ready to take the place in the world which it has vacated."

Early in 1909 the British Government, in face of vigorous attacks by the Opposition, abandoned the attempts to reach an understanding over armaments with Germany as

The Schism of Europe

hopeless. They admitted that there had been an unprecedented increase in the general warlike preparations of Germany as well as in her building programme. Krupp's works had recently taken on 36,000 new hands, an increase of 60 per cent. Recognizing the danger in which Great Britain had placed herself, they proposed, in order to make up leeway and secure the safety of the country, to lay down no less than eight Dreadnoughts in 1909. New Zealand and Australia were no less alarmed and spontaneously decided to build a Dreadnought cruiser each, and Canada announced her intention of commencing a navy of her own.

On March 29, 1909, Sir Edward Grey summed up the whole position in a speech delivered to the House of Commons. He began with a reference to the naval negotiations.

"The House and the country," he said, "are perfectly right in the view that the situation is grave. A new situation in this country is created by the German programme. . . . When that programme is completed, Germany, a great country close to our own shores, will have a fleet of thirty-three Dreadnoughts. . . . That fleet would be the most powerful fleet that the world has ever yet seen. . . . That imposes on us the necessity of which we are now at the beginning—except in so far as we have Dreadnoughts already—of rebuilding the whole of our fleet. That is what the situation is. What we do not know is the time in which we shall have to do it."

Then Sir Edward Grey went on to set forth with not less precision the only conditions on which the peace of Europe would be maintained:

"As regards our future diplomatic relations with Germany, I see a wide space in which both of us may walk in peace and amity. Two things, in my opinion two extreme things, would produce conflict. One is an attempt by us to isolate Germany. No nation of her standing and her position would stand a policy of isolation assumed by neighbouring Powers. I should like to observe that in recent debates nothing has been more unfounded and nothing more malign in its influence than the statement that any difference of opinion we have had with regard to the question of

Austria has been due to the fact that Austria was Germany's friend. On the contrary, we have carefully avoided in all our relations anything which was likely to make difficulty or mischief, directly or indirectly, between those two Powers. Another thing which would certainly produce a conflict would be the isolation of England, the isolation of England attempted by any great Continental Power so as to dominate and dictate the policy of the Continent. That always has been so in history. The same reasons which have caused it in history would cause it again. But between these two extremes of isolation and domination there is a wide space in which the two nations can walk together in a perfectly friendly way.”*

After that he made a further plea for some restriction of expenditure or armaments in the interests of peace :

“If I were asked to name the one thing which would mostly reassure the world—or reassure Europe—with regard to the prospects of peace, I think it would be that the naval expenditure in Germany would be diminished, and that ours was following suit, and being diminished also. Were there a cessation of competition in naval expenditure, public opinion everywhere would take it as a guarantee of the good intentions of the two nations, and the effect would be incalculable.”*

Finally he discussed the basis of a possible understanding with Germany about armaments, pointing out how superior naval power was a matter of life and death to the British Empire, with its vital parts scattered in every continent of the globe, while it was in no sense essential to the safety of Germany :

“On what basis would any arrangement have to be proposed? Not the basis of equality. It must be the basis of a superiority of the British Navy. No German, so far as I know, disputes that that is a natural point of view for us. But it is another thing to ask the German Government to expose itself before its own public opinion to a charge of having co-operated to make the attainment of our views easier. That is the difficulty which it is only fair to state. As

* Sir Edward Grey—House of Commons, March 29, 1909.

The Schism of Europe

against that there is no comparison between the importance of the German Navy to Germany, and the importance of our Navy to us. Our Navy to us is what their army is to them. To have a strong Navy would increase their prestige, their diplomatic influence, their power of protecting their commerce; but as regards us—it is not a matter of life and death to them that it is to us. No superiority of the British Navy over the German Navy could ever put us in a position to affect the independence or integrity of Germany, because our Army is not maintained on a scale, which, unaided, could do anything on German territory. But if the German Navy were superior to ours, they maintaining the Army which they do, for us it would be a question of defeat. Our independence, our very existence, would be at stake.”*

The growth of armaments, he concluded, had become “a satire and reflection upon civilization, which, if it goes on at the rate at which it has recently increased, sooner or later, I believe, will submerge that civilization.” But no nation could stop it alone; action must be mutual and simultaneous. We could not afford to fall into a position of inferiority. If we did, “we should cease to count for anything among the nations of Europe, and we should be fortunate if our liberty was left and we did not become the conscript appendage of some stronger power.”

VI. THE BOSNIAN CRISIS

AS if to give final proof of her intention to “dominate and dictate the policy of the continent,” Germany in the spring of the same year, 1909, intervened in the dispute over Bosnia-Herzegovina, exactly as she had done over Morocco, with a threat of war as the alternative to submission. The Bosnian question was but one aspect of the great racial problem which has kept the Balkans and Austria-Hungary in a ferment for centuries. After the defeat of Austria by Prussia in 1866 the Hungarians had asserted their independence and the Habsburg Monarchy was reconstituted as a Dual monarchy, controlling autocratically for-

* Sir Edward Grey—House of Commons, March 29, 1909.

The Bosnian Crisis

eign affairs and the army, and basing its power on a political system which gave ascendancy over all Slavs in Austria to the Germans, and over all Slavs in Hungary to the Hungarians. In the ensuing years a policy of conciliation to the other races, Czechs, Poles and Slovenes, gradually prevailed in Austria, and a large measure of liberty and self-government was enjoyed by all races. In Hungary, however, the Magyar aristocracy fought desperately against any concessions to their subject peoples. The Slovaks and the Southern Slavs—the Serbs and Croats—were repressed in every conceivable way. They had no voice in their own government. Their language was put under grave disabilities, their newspapers were suppressed, their universities and schools were starved of funds and hindered in other ways, and any exhibition of nationalist sympathies was fiercely punished.

These measures of force fanned the passion for liberty among the Southern Serbs and stimulated to fever heat their love of their language and nationality. After the liberation of Serbia from Turkish rule their hopes centred in Belgrade, and they looked forward to a day when the Southern Slavs would be a free and united people, either outside the Austrian Empire or as a third element, counter-balancing the Magyars and the Germans, within it. In July, 1908, the Young Turk Revolution took place in Constantinople and, on October 9, Austria-Hungary announced the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which she had been administering under the terms of the treaty of Berlin. This act was a blow to the more extreme hopes of the Southern Slavs, but was especially galling to Serbia, which saw her final hope of access to the sea disappear and with it the chance of freeing herself from economic dependence upon Austria. She bitterly demanded compensation; and when Austria absolutely refused to consider her requests, she appealed to Russia—the patron of the Slavs—to intervene, and even made preparations for war. Russia, which had great sympathy with her oppressed Slav fellow subjects, made strong representations to Vienna, but without avail.

At the same time England protested against the abrogation of a European treaty without any reference to the parties to it. She urged that the prospect of international

The Schism of Europe

peace depended largely on the recognition by civilized powers of the sanctity of treaties which they had signed, and that the only hope of avoiding the constant appeal to force in diplomacy or war was by mutually recognizing the reign of law in international affairs in so far as it was defined in treaties and conventions. She had no objection to the actual sovereignty of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia-Herzegovina becoming a formal reality, but she demanded that the revision of the treaty of 1878 should be effected by a conference of all the signatory powers.

Austria-Hungary, however, refused to admit that a conference had any jurisdiction over her *fait accompli*, even though it did involve a change in a fundamental European treaty. She refused also to make any concessions to Serbia or to allow her any access to the sea. In this attitude she was supported by Germany. The dispute dragged on for some months, but was dramatically ended by Germany early in 1909. The German ambassador suddenly presented an ultimatum in St. Petersburg, informing the Russian Government that Germany would mobilize against Russia unless she at once desisted from her support of Serbia and accepted the *status quo*. Russia, disorganized by the Japanese war and by internal revolution, had no option but to agree. The ultimatum also necessarily disposed of the demand for a European conference.

The motive for this act is explained by Prince Bülow, who was then Chancellor, in his book on Imperial Germany. "The German sword," he says, "had been thrown into the scale of the European decision, directly in support of our Austro-Hungarian ally, indirectly for the preservation of European peace, and above all for the sake of German credit and the maintenance of our position in the world. . . . The group of Powers whose influence had been so much overestimated at Algeiras fell to pieces when faced with the tough problems of continental policy. . . . The Triple Alliance is a force against which no country would let itself be thrust forward for the sake of remote interests, even if clever diplomacy were used in the attempt. Hence the course of the Bosnian crisis in point of fact made an end to the policy of isolation."*

* *Imperial Germany*, pp. 51-2.

The Agadir Crisis

The policy of isolation to which the Chancellor refers was the policy of building up an equipoise to the Triple Alliance, so that Germany should not be able to force her neighbours to accept her will under threat of immediate and irresistible attack in war. And the Bosnian *coup* was designed to prove that no such combination existed and that Germany still possessed military and diplomatic predominance over the rest of Europe. To anyone trained, as Prince Bülow was, in the Prussian autocratic school, to pursue a policy of equilibrium, whereby nations are secured in their freedom and independence, was to isolate Germany. What the rulers of Germany never have been able to understand is that other nations value their liberty, and rather than acquiesce in a diplomatic tyranny of Europe by a great militarist State, would fight to the last horse and the last man.

VII. THE AGADIR CRISIS

WITHIN little more than two years Germany again adopted the method of the mailed fist and again brought Europe to the verge of war. Prince Bülow writes: "This was the great lesson of the Bosnian crisis, that our international policy, when all is said and done, is based upon our continental policy." So, having vindicated the military supremacy of the Triple Alliance in Europe in 1909, Germany attempted to profit by it once more in the outside world.

The inevitable process of internal disintegration in Morocco, foreseen at the Algeiras conference, soon began to take place. Accordingly, after minor diplomatic trouble, an agreement was come to in 1909 between France and Germany "to facilitate the execution of the Algeiras Act," which would, as Prince Bülow said in the Reichstag, "put co-operation in the opening up of the country in place of mutual hostility." France declared herself "wholly attached to the integrity and independence of the Shereefian Empire," and pledged herself "not to impede German commercial and industrial interests in Morocco." Germany, on the other hand, "pursuing only economic interests," recognized that France possessed "special political interests in Morocco, which were closely bound up with the consolidation of order

The Schism of Europe

and internal peace." This was taken to be a tacit acknowledgment that Germany accepted the understanding, long arrived at by the other Great Powers, that France and Spain were to intervene in Morocco should misgovernment make European control necessary, provided they guaranteed equality of trade to all nations in the country they occupied. By the early summer of 1911, partly owing to internal disorder, partly owing to the intrigues, financial and otherwise, of French and Spanish adventurers, things had come to such a pass in Morocco that one-third of the country was occupied by these two powers, and a French army had entered Fez. Suddenly, on July 1, the German Government announced that they had sent the gunboat "Panther" to the open port of Agadir, ostensibly "to help and protect German subjects and clients in those regions" who might be affected by the growing internal disorder. In reality, as all the diplomatic world knew, it was a rattling of the sabre to intimate to France that Germany must receive "compensation" before she could acquiesce in the annexation of Morocco by France and Spain. It was also suspected that the occasion would be used to make another attempt to isolate France, and so put her out of the race, by compelling her to abandon the Entente under the threat of instant war. This suspicion proved to be well founded.

The actual course of the crisis was as follows. On the same day that the "Panther" was sent to Agadir—July 1—the German Ambassador in London informed the British Government that Germany "regarded a return to the *status quo* in Morocco as doubtful, if not impossible, and that what they contemplated was a definite solution of the Moroccan question between France, Spain and Germany." Three days later Sir Edward Grey informed the German Ambassador that England had treaty obligations with France about Morocco and interests of her own there, so that she could not be indifferent to the course of the negotiations. Meanwhile direct negotiations were proceeding between France and Germany, in which England took no part, as neither her own interests nor her treaty obligations seemed to be involved. But eventually, as Sir Edward Grey said:

"It appeared in the Press that the German Government, and indeed it was the case, that the German

The Agadir Crisis

Government had made demands with regard to the French Congo of an extent to which it was obvious to everybody who thought of it that neither the French Government nor the French Chamber could agree. That at once made me anxious as to the development of the situation. If Germany was going to negotiate with France an arrangement by which Germany received from France something in the French Congo and left France in Morocco as she is under our agreement of 1904, then of course we were prepared to stand aside and not to intrude, but if Germany, starting negotiations on that basis with France, made demands not for a portion, but for the greater part of the French Congo or anything of that kind, it was quite clear that France must refuse those demands, and negotiations would be thrown back on some other basis, and the question of the possible partition would arise again.”*

Germany in fact was doing exactly what Sir Edward Grey in his speech of March, 1909, had made clear must endanger the peace of Europe. Though protected herself by the Triple Alliance, which nobody had ever attempted to undermine, she was trying to break up the Triple Entente, a combination which had no aggressive or exclusive objects, and which had only been brought into being by the domineering and threatening diplomacy of Germany herself. The method of doing this which she had selected was that of making extortionate demands from France under threat of instant war if she refused, at the same time declaring that the Morocco negotiations were the concern of Germany, France and Spain alone, with which England, which was concerned in them by self-interest, the Algeciras Act and other treaties, had nothing to do. By July 21 the situation had reached the breaking point. Germany persisted in her demands and persisted in her attitude of military menace. The real question was no longer Morocco, but whether France would be compelled once more to accept the terms imposed upon her by the German sword, or whether the Entente was sufficiently firm and united to resist the attempted blackmail even at the risk of war. On July 21 England accepted the challenge. Sir Edward Grey informed the German Ambassador that

* Speech in House of Commons, November 29, 1911.

The Schism of Europe

England had no wish to intervene in friendly negotiations between France and Germany, but that if Germany—as appeared to be and indeed was the case—made “demands which were in effect not a rectification of the frontier but a cession of the French Congo, which it was obviously impossible for the French Government to concede,” and especially if they proposed to take Agadir as a naval base, England could not stand aside. On the same evening Mr. Lloyd George made a speech at the Mansion House, in which he said that England had made great sacrifices to preserve peace, but that if a situation were to be forced upon her,

“in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests are vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be humiliation intolerable for a great country like ourselves to endure.”

This step of supplementing a diplomatic communication by a platform utterance, mild in actual purport, but rhetorical in tone, made negotiations very difficult for a day or two. The German Government protested vigorously against the speech, but nothing could hide the real position. Great Britain had made it clear that, if Germany intended to force impossible concessions from France at the point of the sword, she would stand by France in resisting them, even at the cost of war. After a war council at Potsdam, at which it was decided that Germany was not ready for war, Germany gave way. She made an “exceedingly friendly” reply, and all danger was past. The French and German Governments proceeded to negotiate an agreement (signed November 4) whereby Germany acquiesced in the occupation of Morocco by Spain and France, and obtained a slice of the French Congo by way of compensation.

It is impossible for the outsider to estimate the precise merits of the details of the long Morocco controversy between France and Germany. They are not yet all public. What is clear is that Germany by starting every negotiation with the threat of war prejudiced hopelessly her own case.

The Agadir Crisis

Instead of confining herself to the question of whether France was entitled to absorb Morocco, or whether Germany was entitled to compensation from France, and if so, what and where, she began on every occasion by attempting to intimidate France into submission and to isolate her from her friends. Directly the factor of power was introduced, overriding the rights and wrongs of the case, the other Entente Powers, in self-defence and in the interest of national Freedom in Europe, had no option but to range themselves with France against her tyrannous neighbour. To the honest German, preoccupied with his own destiny, and misinformed by the official Press Bureau, this seemed a piece of deliberate and selfish hemming in. He has never understood that the bludgeoning methods of the Prussian autocracy which he so much detests in Germany, but acquiesces in because he has to, are bound, when applied in external affairs, to unite outsiders, not in selfish and greedy hostility to his country, but in common self-defence.

The Agadir crisis produced an immense impression in Germany. It was not only that the German Government, after issuing a challenge to France and England, had retired directly it had been accepted, though that was an intolerable humiliation to a military caste trained to a code of honour in which slights and provocation still have to be wiped out by the duel. It was that the whole theory which underlay the Prussian domination of Germany, and the confident hope that Germany was eventually to reach the first place in the world by her tremendous expenditure on armaments, had been called in question. That theory depended upon the belief that if Germany only spent enough on armaments, she would eventually beat her neighbours into subservience, either by exhaustion or, in the last resort, by war. To this end she had steadily increased her navy. With this object she had fostered in every possible way the trade and prosperity of the people, for they provided the sinews out of which power is made. And with the same purpose she had discouraged emigration and colonization. Though the acquisition of colonies has played its part in the Press campaign of the Navy League, it has never been an important aim of Government policy. Colonies in any case were a doubtful benefit. They exhausted the manhood of the home

The Schism of Europe

land. They were turbulent and disobedient. Emigrants went to foreign countries like the United States or South America, where wages were high, not to the barren and undeveloped colonies of Germany. It was a better policy in every way to "keep our people happy and prosperous at home," strengthening the army, adding to German wealth, and so available for the day when in a supreme struggle all the best possessions of her rivals would fall into the lap of a victorious Germany.

In accordance with this general policy the rulers of Germany had confidently expected that France, divided by religious and social quarrels, would not keep up the struggle for full national liberty much longer. This seemed inevitable from the figures of population alone.

1861	Prussia	19,000,000	France	37,000,000
1868	North German Confederacy.	30,000,000	"	38,000,000
1871	German Empire	41,000,000	"	36,000,000
1910	German Empire	65,000,000	"	39,000,000

If France could only be made to suffer a few more rebuffs like that of 1905, she would reluctantly sink to the level of a second-rate power and concern herself no more with the high affairs of world politics, and one more of Germany's rivals would disappear. But Agadir made Germany suddenly realize that none of her dreams was coming true. Her restless world policy, the great Navy Laws of 1898, 1900, 1906 and 1908, the successes won under threat of war against France in 1905, and against Russia in 1909, had roused the fears of her neighbours to the point that they had composed their own quarrels and had united in a tacit understanding to resist in common the tyrannous domination of Germany. 1911, so far from proving that the Triple Entente was a powerless fiction, and that France was an effete power, had proved that German foreign policy had succeeded in uniting all Europe in self-defence and that Germany herself, for the first time in her history, had had to beat a retreat.

VIII. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MENACE

IT is not to be supposed that the whole German people, which had shown such liberal tendencies in 1848, had meekly acquiesced in the autocratic regime and in its aggres-

The Social Democratic Menace

sive foreign policy all these years. For the first six years after the formation of the union Bismarck leaned upon the support of the National Liberals. They hailed him as the man who had achieved one of their great ideals, and looked forward to the gradual accomplishment of the other under his guiding hand. But Bismarck had no intention of making any concessions either to Germany or to democracy, and gradually became estranged from the Liberals. Starting his career as Chancellor with the famous Kulturkampf, an attack on the Roman Catholic party of the centre, which was particularist and suspicious of his unifying policy, he rapidly changed round in 1877. He realized that no compromise was possible between himself and any true Liberal or Democratic party. He therefore set himself to win the support of all who shared his belief in monarchical autocracy and in the ascendancy of Prussia. He turned to the Pussian Junker agrarians, ultra-conservative and monarchical and contemptuous of the rest of Germany, and to the Roman Catholics, who welcomed the emphasis he laid on authority and the duty of obedience, and who numbered among them many of the South German rulers. From 1877 until 1907 the Government secured a docile majority in the Reichstag from these two parties—the Conservatives and the Centre. As time went on the Liberals—more and more entranced by the amazing diplomatic, financial and commercial success of Germany—forgot their principles, and came nearer to terms with the Government. One party alone was irreconcilable, the Social Democrats.

Social Democracy, in its essence, was opposition to the whole theory and system of government inaugurated by Bismarck. It repudiated monarchical autocracy. It demanded popular government, liberty and equality. It hated militarism and the doctrine that any section of the community should be protected in an ascendancy over the rest. It was bitterly opposed to an aggressive foreign policy. Social Democracy collected under its banner all the elements of discontent, from the idealists, who demanded the sovereignty of the people, to the individuals who were exasperated by the tyranny of bureaucratic officialdom and police. Bismarck attempted to destroy Social Democracy by force. He prohibited its organization, its newspapers and its so-

The Schism of Europe

cieties. He forbade meetings of its members. He even proposed that anyone legally convicted of holding Socialist opinions should be deprived of the franchise and excluded from the Reichstag, but his colleagues would not support him in this extreme measure. Social Democrats were abused by the authorities in the most unmeasured terms. The Kaiser said: "For me every Social Democrat is an enemy of the Empire and the Fatherland." They were described as traitors, as men without a country, as the enemies of the State. This they were not. They were often revolutionary and extreme. They had little understanding of the practical difficulties and problems of government. But they were the class in which alone the passion for liberty and self-government still flowered and which alone refused to bow before the great machine of autocratic efficiency which was gradually crushing all real independence out of the German people. And between them and the system of autocratic government, according to the Prussian tradition, no compromise was possible. They were the enemies not of Germany, but of the Prussian conception of the State. As Prince Bülow says: "The Social Democratic movement is the antithesis of the Prussian State," "for decades [it] has been combating the monarchical and military foundations of the Prussian State."*

Their power and influence in Germany steadily grew. It is shown in the following table of the number of votes polled by them at the Reichstag elections.

1884	.	.	.	.	.	.	550,000
1887	.	.	.	.	.	.	763,000
1890	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,427,000
1893	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,787,000
1898	.	.	.	.	.	.	2,107,000
1903	.	.	.	.	.	.	3,011,000
1907	.	.	.	.	.	.	3,539,000
1912	.	.	.	.	.	.	4,250,000

By 1907 the position was becoming serious. In the preceding elections they had won 80 seats out of 397. The Government was determined to cripple them. As Prince Bülow, who had charge of the elections, said, "It is the duty of every German Ministry to combat this movement

* *Imperial Germany*, pp. 186, 189.

The Social Democratic Menace

until it is defeated or materially changed. There can be no doubt about the task itself, but there may be hesitation as to the choice of means."* It shows how abysmal is the gulf which separates Germany from popular government that a Chancellor should speak in such terms of by far the largest body of voters in the Empire. Prince Bülow, after rejecting the idea of using force as being ineffective, says that the true remedy against Social Democracy is a vigorous national policy. If every other means fails, an appeal to the deeply ingrained and carefully fostered patriotic sentiment will succeed. Such an appeal to national sentiment must be sounded in thrilling notes. "Nothing," he says, "has a more discouraging, paralysing and depressing effect on a clever, enterprising and highly developed nation such as the Germans than a monotonous, dull policy which, for fear of an ensuing fight, avoids rousing passions by strong action."†

This policy, pursued in 1906-7, was a striking success. The whole country was dissatisfied. High hopes had been entertained of triumphs in Morocco and these had been shattered by the Algeciras conference. The Bagdad railway, another project which had raised great expectations, was evidently not going to bring prestige and prosperity rapidly in its track. The war against the Hereros in German South-West Africa had been a somewhat gloomy fiasco. The excitement over expansion in China had died away when it was realized that it was mainly a matter of humdrum trade. The hoax perpetrated by the famous Captain of Koepenick reflected the prevailing temper of disgust at the management of Imperial affairs. The question of ministerial responsibility was openly discussed. Prince Bülow, however, announced in the Reichstag on November 14 that this was impossible. "In Germany the ministers were not the organs of Parliament and its temporary majority. They were the men who possessed the confidence of the Crown, and the legislative ordinances were the ordinances of the Government and the Monarch."

Immediately afterwards the Reichstag was dissolved with a tremendous appeal to national sentiment. The main issue

* *Imperial Germany*, p. 171.

† *Ibid.*, p. 199.

The Schism of Europe

is seen in the pronouncements of the chief parties. The Social Democrats condemned wild naval schemes and an ambitious world-policy, and reiterated their demands for democratic government. The Centre—which was out of favour with the Government—said that the issue was “whether the representatives of the people are to be bound to vote what the chief military authorities and colonial governors demand.” The *North German Gazette*—the official Government organ—said the true question was “whether Germany is at all capable of developing from a European power into a world power.” By a deft arrangement with the National Liberals and the Radicals, who accepted the cry of “the State in danger,” Prince Bülow was able, on the second ballots, to secure the defeat of the Social Democrats. Though their poll rose from 3,011,000 to 3,539,000, their seats fell from 81 to 43. The policy of becoming a world power had prevailed. As Prince Bülow said after the election: “The whole world will recognize that the German nation sits firmly in the saddle, and that it will ride down everything which places itself in the way of its well being and its greatness.” The Government reaped its reward in the fourth great Navy Law of 1908.

But though the elections of 1907 and still more the successful “shining armour” ultimatum to Russia in 1909 restored the prestige and authority of the Government, the pressure for reform did not diminish. There was great agitation from 1908 to 1910 over the reform of the Prussian constitution. The three-class system of voting and the distribution of seats had remained unchanged for nearly sixty years and was grotesquely unfair. Thus 314,000 Social Democratic voters were entirely unrepresented in the Landtag, while 324,000 Conservatives returned 143 members. The propertied and agrarian classes returned over 300 members, the remainder, including the vast industrial districts of the Rhine, 130. Some of the constituencies contained 40,000 voters, others 500,000 or even 700,000. A bill to remedy some of the most glaring grievances was introduced in 1908. But it did nothing to change the fundamental fact that by the Prussian constitution the whole power rested with the Junker class, and that this class, from which were mainly recruited the higher military and bureau-

The Social Democratic Menace

cratic officials, shared with the Court the control of the destinies of the German Empire. Hence when amendments were introduced in favour of a fair and equal franchise system, they were rejected by Prince Bülow as incompatible with the welfare of the State, or in other words with the predominance of the Prussian ruling caste. In 1910 the franchise reform bill was withdrawn, for the democratic party would not accept the meaningless concessions of the Government and so prejudice their chances in the future, and the Government would offer no more. The new Chancellor, Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, who had succeeded Prince Bülow in the preceding year, said in the Reichstag that "Prussia could not allow herself to be towed into the waters of Parliamentary government while the power of the Monarchy remained unbroken. That power of the Monarchy, which had always made it its proud tradition to be a kingdom for all, would not be tampered with."* And later in the same year, in defending the Emperor against attacks about his speech on divine right at Königsberg, he said that the Emperor's declaration as to the rights and duties of Prussian sovereigns was in no way incompatible with the Prussian constitution, which did not recognize the sovereignty of the people.

The failure at Agadir immensely increased the discontent with the Government. The Social Democrats pointed out that they had always foretold disaster from the official policy. The rest of the country declared that the Government was incompetent and was going to fail in winning for Germany the position of ascendancy in the world which they had always promised, if the people would do as they were told. The Reichstag elections took place immediately after the crisis, in December, 1911. The spirit of discontent was clearly indicated. Despite all the efforts of the Government the number of Social Democratic members rose from 43 to 110. As the Chancellor said in his opening speech to the new Reichstag, the oldest Parliamentary hand among them had never stood face to face with a political situation so uncertain.

* *Annual Register*, 1910.

The Schism of Europe

IX. REFORM OR WAR

HOW deeply the ruling classes felt the humiliation of Agadir is seen in the steps they took to make sure that it should never happen again. They immediately had recourse to the time-honoured Prussian expedient—the building up of more power, so that when the next crisis came, whether it was internal or external, they might count on overthrowing their enemies and demonstrating the folly of every attempt on their privileged position. In 1912 a new Army Law raising the peace strength of the army from 515,000 to 544,000 was passed as a first instalment. In the same year a fifth Navy Law was passed, adding three new battleships to the programme and 15,150 officers and men to the personnel, and what was far more important, providing that four-fifths of the fleet should be kept permanently in commission ready to strike at a moment's notice. In the next year another, and this time a truly terrific, Army Law was introduced and passed. It provided for many new formations, 4,000 officers and 15,000 N.C.O.'s, and the annual contingent of recruits was increased so that the peace strength of the Army should rise to 870,000. At the same time a special levy on property was announced amounting to £50,000,000, to be all paid by July 1, 1914, and to be spent on fortifications, equipment, and other capital preparation for war. This Bill was justified by the Chancellor because it was "according to the unanimous judgment of the military authorities necessary in order to secure the future of Germany."

This reference to the unanimous judgment of the military authorities produced the effect intended by Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, and the measures were passed without serious difficulty. The Agadir crisis was adduced as proof of a plot on the part of the Entente powers against the liberties and future of Germany, which it was necessary for every patriotic German to shatter by demonstrating finally and forever the spirit of self-sacrifice which animated him, and the immense and irresistible power of Germany if anyone stood in her way. At the same time a vigorous campaign was instituted by the Press Bureau against France and Russia.

Reform or War

The moral of the Agadir crisis for Germany was that France was no longer afraid of Germany and had become warlike once more. A report to the French Government, dated July 30, 1913, summarizes a large number of German opinions from all parts and classes as follows:

“The treaty of November 4 is a diplomatic defeat, a proof of the incapacity of German diplomacy and the carelessness of the Government (so often denounced), a proof that the future of the Empire is not safe without a new Bismarck; it is a national humiliation, a lowering in the eyes of Europe, a blow to German prestige, all the more serious because up to 1911 the military supremacy of Germany was unchallenged, and French anarchy and the powerlessness of the Republic were a sort of German dogma.”

In the case of Russia the Press campaign made much of the growing Slav peril. The presence on her Eastern frontier of the great Russian State, even more backward politically than is Germany herself, must always be a grave preoccupation for Germany. It imposes on her, and will impose on her, the need for a large national army. But the “Slav peril” of the last few days is largely an artificial product. It is not Russian aggressiveness, but the doctrine of racial ascendancy, with its forcible denationalization of the Slavs by the Germans and Magyars, and its outcome the assertion of Teutonic predominance over the Slav States of the Balkans which has caused the estrangement between Teuton and Slav. Even so, for the last ten years there has been no true Slav menace. Russia has been paralysed by the defeat in Manchuria, and the revolution which followed it. There has been no question of her being able to attack the Triple Alliance with the faintest chance of success, even when the organization of her army was complete (1916), and she had built a navy. The real Slav menace has been that a regenerated Russia, in alliance with a regenerated France, would finally deprive Germany of diplomatic and military hegemony over Europe and force her to admit that she could no longer dictate to her neighbours under threat of war.

The Schism of Europe

Hence the tremendous expansion of naval and military armaments of the years 1912 and 1913, and the intense disappointment when it was found that France was not going to be forced out of the race. For by a supreme effort in the year 1913 France passed a Bill providing that every soldier should spend three years instead of two with the colours. This did not increase the war strength of the Army, as the whole available population was already conscribed, but it strengthened its peace footing, and kept such a number of men in the army that the enlarged peace force of Germany would not be so superior as to be able certainly to overwhelm it before mobilization was complete.

Despite the ominous signs the Liberal Government in Great Britain persisted in its efforts to come to an understanding with Germany, and the German Government, only too anxious to keep England from becoming too intimate with France and Russia, gladly welcomed the advances. There was great friendliness during the London Conferences over the Balkan wars, and an agreement was reached, shortly before the outbreak of war, about the access of the Bagdad railway to the Persian Gulf. But on the main issue—the expansion of armaments—Germany refused to make the slightest concession. England explained that the British Empire with its vital parts, the British Isles, Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and India, distributed all over the world, could not possibly afford to allow Germany, which already had the most powerful army in the world, to build a fleet equal to her own. But she was content with a 60 per cent. superiority over Germany, and would gladly agree to a simultaneous reduction of programme on the basis that these proportions were maintained. On the other hand, if Germany persisted in her policy of expansion, it would do her no good, for England was resolved that for every Dreadnought added to the German programme, she would build two. In this way it was hoped that at any rate further expansion would be prevented. But the ruling classes in Germany were wedded to their policy of armaments, and their reply was yet another new Navy Law in 1912. In July, therefore, Mr. Churchill introduced supplementary Navy estimates amounting to £990,000, stating that these were the direct result of the new German

Reform or War

Navy Law, the fifth large increase of the German programme in fourteen years, which provided for four-fifths of the German fleet being kept in instant readiness for war.

In the same year Mr. Haldane went on a special mission to Berlin to try to arrive at some understanding with Germany on behalf of the British Government. He was authorized to give this assurance: "Britain declares that she will neither make nor join in any unprovoked attack upon Germany. Aggression upon Germany is not the subject and forms no part of any treaty, understanding or combination to which Britain is now a party, nor will she become a party to anything that has such an object." The German Government replied that the basis of any understanding must be an absolute pledge from England that she would remain neutral in all circumstances in the event of Germany being engaged in war. But as Sir Edward Grey said in November, 1911, "one does not make new friendships worth having by deserting old ones. New friendships by all means let us make, but not at the expense of the ones we have." The German proposal would have meant the desertion of France in her struggle for national freedom. Moreover, the new German Army and Navy Laws were an obvious menace to the liberty of Europe. No free country could guarantee to stand as a spectator aside, while they were being used to tyrannize over weaker powers. So the negotiations fell through. Despite this demonstration of Germany's attitude towards her neighbours the Liberal Government in the next year made yet another advance to Germany. Speaking on October 18, Mr. Churchill said that according to their respective programmes for 1914, England would lay down four Dreadnoughts and Germany two. He promised on behalf of the British Government that if Germany would put off laying down her two Dreadnoughts for twelve months, England would put off laying down her four for the same length of time. By this "naval holiday" the relative position of the two Powers would remain unchanged, while each would have saved several million pounds which could be more usefully directed to other purposes. The proposal was rejected by Grand Admiral von Tirpitz in a firm yet friendly reply.

The Schism of Europe

Thus the attempt to wear down the staying powers of France and England by a tremendous new effort by land and sea failed. The only effect was to increase the alarm and unity of the Entente powers, and to swell immensely discontent in Germany. Every class felt that the burden was growing insupportable. Even the Junkers protested against taxation, which had begun to fall heavily upon themselves. There was a growing feeling that the situation was intolerable and must relieve itself—if need be, by war. The military party, of course, were set on this solution, as they believed that success was certain; and it was said that the Emperor, hitherto favourable to peace, was going over to their view. Moreover the effect of their teaching of the last forty years had begun to tell decisively upon the masses of the nation, and there was strong popular approval for the doctrine that if her neighbours would not admit the paramountcy of Germany in Europe peaceably, they must be made to do so by force. How much the Chauvinist doctrine has spread of late years appears from the following quotation from Professor Otfried Nippold:

“Hand in hand,” he says, “with this outspoken hostility to foreign countries are enjoined a one-sided exaltation of war and a war mania such as would have been regarded as impossible a few years ago. One can only confess with regret the fact that to-day there is so much irresponsible agitation against other States and nations and so much frivolous incitement to war. It cannot be doubted that this agitation is part of a deliberate scheme, the object of which is gradually to win the population and if possible the Government, by any means whatever—even by the distortion of fact and malicious slander—for the programme of the Chauvinists. These people not only incite the nation to war, but systematically stimulate the desire for war. War is pictured not as a possibility that may occur, but as a necessity that must come, and the sooner the better. The quintessence of the teachings of the organizations of Chauvinism . . . is always the same; a European war is not merely an eventuality for which we must be prepared, but a necessity for which we should in the interest of the German nation rejoice. From this dogma it is only a small step to the next maxim of the

Reform or War

Chauvinist which is so dear to the heart of the belligerent political generals—the maxim of the ‘war of attack,’ or the so-called preventive war. If war has to come, then let it come at the moment most favourable to us. In other words, do not let us wait until a formal cause for war occurs, but let us strike when it best suits us, and above all let us strike soon.”

How powerful these Chauvinist organizations were may be inferred from the fact that the German Navy League in 1907 had a subscribing membership of over a million, while its monthly newspaper, *Die Flotte*, had a circulation of 375,000 copies. During the last few years the flood of literature on the inevitability and “duty” of war has steadily increased.

The character of the propaganda is exactly expressed by the leaders of the “Young Germany” movement. One of them wrote in its official organ for 1913:

“War is the noblest and holiest expression of human activity. For us, too, the glad great hour of battle will strike. Still and deep in the German heart must live the joy of battle and the longing for it. Let us ridicule to the utmost the old women in breeches who fear war and deplore it as cruel and revolting. No, war is beautiful, its august sublimity elevates the human heart beyond the earthly and the common. In the cloud palace above sit the heroes, Frederick the Great and Blucher, and all the men of action—the Great Emperor, Moltke, Roon and Bismarck—are there as well, but not the old women who would take away our joy in war. When here on earth a battle is won by German arms and the faithful dead ascend to heaven, a Potsdam Lance-corporal will call the guard to the door, and old ‘Fritzy,’ springing from his golden throne, will give the command to present arms. That is the heaven of young Germany.”*

Moreover the standard of political morality in international affairs had steadily fallen under the influence of the Prussian teaching about the State. For this degeneration Bismarck himself is in great measure to blame. In his retirement he delighted to talk about his own diplomatic skill and cunning.

* Quoted by Mr. W. H. Dawson, *What is Wrong with Germany*.

The Schism of Europe

“The conclusions drawn from these disclosures and others which followed were exaggerated, but the naïve, simple belief of the people was irretrievably destroyed. Where they had been taught to see the will of God they found only the machinations of the minister. In a country where patriotism had already taken the place of religion, the last illusion had been dispelled; almost the last barrier had been broken down which stood between the nation and moral scepticism.”*

Meanwhile war began to darken Europe for the first time for many years. In 1911 war had broken out between Italy and Turkey over Tripoli, and by the spring of the next year Tripoli had been annexed to the Italian kingdom. Though the Triple Alliance was solemnly renewed in the autumn of 1912, one half of its foundation had thus been knocked away. Bismarck had succeeded in inducing Italy to join the Triple Alliance in 1882 by secretly urging France to annex Tunis, which Italy coveted, in the preceding year. By the acquisition of Tripoli, which France encouraged, Italy was now appeased and the two countries were reconciled. There was only the other foundation for the Triple Alliance left, the necessity of avoiding constant quarrels and warlike gestures between the ancient enemies, Italy and Austria, which for twenty years had been prevented by uniting them in an alliance. But an alliance was only possible so long as the general policies of the two countries did not conflict, and events in the Balkan Peninsula and the general trend of Austro-German policy began to drive the two countries further and further apart. In 1912 the first Balkan war broke out and led to the rapid overthrow of the Turkish Empire in Europe. This was a severe blow to Austro-German policy, which aimed at establishing a permanent hegemony of the Balkan Peninsula, based upon the overwhelming military strength of the central European Powers to the north and the military regeneration of Turkey by German officers to the south. The first Balkan War not only weakened Turkey but placed a barrier of Slav and Greek States across the road. This was especially objectionable to Austria-Hungary, as the success of Serbia immensely complicated her own internal problems, by increasing the prestige of the Serbian people

* Headlam, *Life of Bismarck*, p. 460.

The Outbreak

and raising the hopes of the Serbo-Croat subjects of the monarchy for their eventual liberation from the Magyar yoke, and union inside or outside the monarchy. Accordingly, under Magyar influence the Austro-Hungarian Government, which had already put an absolute embargo on Serbia's obtaining access to the Adriatic, incited Bulgaria to attack her former allies. But so far from improving the position it made it a thousandfold worse, for Serbia and Greece, assisted by Roumania, were immediately victorious and came out stronger than before. It was during this time that Austria-Hungary proposed to Italy that they should join in overwhelming Serbia before she could recover from two wars, and so settle the business once and for all in favour of the monarchy. But Italy had no desire to see Austria predominant in the Balkans. Russia also emphatically declared that any military attack on Serbia would mean war with Russia. And Germany, who was still in the middle of her military preparations, supported loyally Sir Edward Grey's efforts for peace by making it clear at Vienna that if Austria-Hungary became embroiled with Russia through military aggression on Serbia she would not have German support, and by making it equally clear in Petrograd that if Russia quarreled with Austria-Hungary so long as the latter did not attack Serbia, Germany would fight with her ally. Hence the crisis passed by. But it was not over, as was shown by the fact that in the same year Austria-Hungary voted £28,000,000 for extraordinary military expenditure.

X. THE OUTBREAK

EUROPE was in this dangerous condition when a Bosnian assassin murdered the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne—the Archduke Francis Ferdinand—in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. The tragedy had a double effect. It removed the one man who might have solved the Slav problem in Austria-Hungary by peaceful statesmanship, and it threw absolute power into the hands of the Magyar party of racial ascendancy and expansion by force of arms. This party at once determined, come what might, to make an end of Serbian independence and Southern Slav aspirations.

The Schism of Europe

In Germany also it was felt that a crisis in the national history had come. Now if ever was the time to prove that, despite Agadir, Germany and her allies were the predominant power in Europe, and to rehabilitate the prestige of the ruling classes. The method chosen was exactly that of 1905, 1909 and 1911. The two Governments presented the powers of the Entente with a choice between surrender and war. Only this time there was to be no parley or delay. The alternatives were to be inexorable. Either the Entente powers had to give way and allow Austria-Hungary to destroy the liberties of Serbia, or they had to take up the gauntlet and fight Germany and Austria-Hungary at a time chosen by themselves. In either event Germany felt sure of victory. If the Entente powers, when faced with war, retreated and allowed Austria-Hungary to work her will on Serbia unmolested, Germany would have asserted her military predominance in the most decisive and unmistakable fashion to the whole world. The Triple Entente, too, by admitting its uselessness in a real crisis, would almost certainly break up and the diplomatic ascendancy of Germany in Europe would then be undisputed. If the Entente powers accepted the challenge, the prospects were even better. The great German General Staff had long promised a short and successful war, like those of 1866 and 1870. The most perfect of all the products of the German genius for organization, and trained in the wonderful school of Moltke, it had thought out every detail of the great campaign for the mastery of Europe. Provided it could choose its own moment for war, it was ready to guarantee to smash the French army and occupy Paris in three weeks and then turn back and, in conjunction with the Austrian armies, prove to Russia that she could make no sort of impression on her Teuton foes. France might fight on, but she would never be able to eject the German armies from Paris and North France, and as the indemnities extracted from both gradually bled her to death, she would be compelled reluctantly to make peace. England would probably not come in. In any case she would intervene too late, and her army was too small to affect the issue in the decisive military theatre, and if France and Russia were defeated, it was only a question of time for England also to make peace.

The Outbreak

This plan involved, it is true, the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, and strategic railways to the Belgian frontier had accordingly been commenced as long before as 1906, but Belgium could not be allowed to stand in the path of the German destiny. Moreover, the Belgian route made the rapid conquest of France almost certain, and it had the additional advantage, if Belgium resisted, that Germany would be able to keep some portion of that country at the end of the war, thus bringing her frontiers within 120 miles of Paris and making it finally impossible for France to think of resisting her will by force of arms after the war. To the German General Staff, victory was as certain as human foresight could make it. The omens at the moment were propitious. Italy, it was known, would not join in such a war. But she could be counted on to be neutral. Russia would not have completed the reorganization of her army till 1916, and was troubled at the moment with strikes. In France the railways were supposed to be disorganized and revelations had recently been made showing a great shortage of equipment and supplies. England was manifestly pacific, and was so divided internally as to be on the verge of civil war in Ireland. On the other hand, the German army had just been increased. Enormous sums had been spent both in Germany and Austria-Hungary on arms, equipment and stores. And Turkey was almost in German hands. Such a favourable opportunity might never return. Moreover, the murder of the Archduke was an excellent pretext. Austria-Hungary certainly had a case against Serbia. It would be quite easy to persuade the whole German people, already alarmed by the press campaign of 1913 over the designs of France and the Slav peril, that Germany had been wantonly attacked and that it was the duty of every citizen to support the Government without criticism or question, in defence of the safety and liberty of the Fatherland.

Hence the character of the ultimatum. It was so framed as to make acceptance impossible and to be a deliberate challenge to Russia. An answer was required within forty-eight hours, which gave no time for negotiation or mediation or for any of the ordinary expedients for averting war. Directly it expired, military movements against Serbia were

The Schism of Europe

begun. To every representation Germany replied that the question was a purely Austro-Serbian one in which the rest of the world had no concern. She passed on the suggestions of Sir Edward Grey and others, but she backed her ally in refusing to discuss them. In a matter which had for many years been the common subject of diplomatic intercourse, and which had been under consideration during 1912 and 1913 at the London Conference of Ambassadors, and which manifestly affected the rights of other nations and the peace of the world, Europe was told that it had no concern. Germany and Austria-Hungary were determined to settle the question in their own way and would fight rather than allow any one else to interfere. Germany, in fact, which had claimed for years the right to interfere in every problem throughout the world and had claimed that nothing should be done anywhere without her consent, now insisted on settling a European question in her own way, and declared that nobody else, even those vitally interested, was to be allowed a voice.

The correct proceeding would have been for Austria-Hungary to declare to Europe that she was convinced of Serbian complicity in the Serajevo crime, that the situation was growing intolerable, and that unless by the pressure of the Powers Serbia could be induced within reasonable time to give security that she was not attempting to dismember the Habsburg monarchy, she would be forced to take drastic action. This would have given reason and diplomacy a chance, and a general European war would probably have been averted. But the crushing of Serbia was to Austria an act of policy prompted by the Magyar determination to maintain their ascendancy over the Southern Slavs, and had been decided on long before the assassination. And to Germany the Serbian affair was only the pretext for another diplomatic *coup* with the mailed fist, and her approval to the method of the ultimatum was given with an eye to the humiliation of the Entente rather than to the punishment of Serbia.

It is quite impossible at present to say whether the Emperor and the Chancellor contemplated war from the beginning. Probably they calculated that, if their action was sudden and decisive enough, their opponents, divided and

The Outbreak

distracted by internal difficulties, would hesitate and then give way, and that after their humiliation had been established, an agreement would be patched up. But they must have known that after 1911 it was impossible for them to make concessions themselves, and that after the rebuffs of 1905 and 1909 it was very difficult for France and Russia to retreat in the face of threats, and that the policy of an ultimatum with a time limit was as likely to bring Europe to war as any policy could be. In determining therefore to challenge Europe in this way they must have been prepared for war as a likely, if not a certain, outcome. It is evident that there was a moment's hesitation on the part of the Emperor and the Chancellor on July 29, when it had become clear that the powers of the Entente were not going to submit to the fourth threat of war in nine years, and that war was inevitable unless Germany and Austria were willing to treat the question as a European question and to discuss a settlement based upon the concessions promised in the almost abject Serbian reply. But at this crucial time the final defect of the Bismarckian system inclined the balance. Though the Chancellor is, under the Emperor, the ruler of Germany, he has nothing to do with the Army. The Emperor himself is sole head of the Army. During the preceding ten years, under the pressure of the great German military engine and under its constant threats of war, the whole of Europe had been lined up into two great military camps. As their military preparations were perfected, the factor of time became increasingly important. The Power which could strike first and before its opponent was mobilized and in position could make victory almost certain. And so now, directly the military machine had been set in motion by the Austrian ultimatum, the German General Staff swept the Foreign Office aside and took charge. The mobilization of the Austro-Hungarian army against Serbia and its attack on Serbia were followed by the mobilization of the Southern Russian army, for in no other way could Russia show that she meant to save Serbia from annihilation. This precipitated preliminary preparations in Germany, which in turn lead to general mobilization in Russia, and this prompted the final ultimatum to Russia that the only alternative to war was the abject surrender

The Schism of Europe

of Russia, signified by the total demobilization of her whole army. War, indeed, was almost certain from the time Austria began to move. It was absolutely inevitable from the time that Russia, responding to preparations in Austria and Germany, mobilized in her northern districts, for that brought into operation the terrible time-table which the German General Staff had prepared to ensure certain victory for the German arms.

There was only one question in doubt—whether England would fight. So little attention had been paid in England of late years to foreign affairs that there was but the vaguest understanding in the country at large of what the German menace really was. There was a general feeling, however, that if France was to be attacked, England had no option but to stand by her, in view of the tacit but none the less real obligations of the Entente. But it was the violation of Belgian neutrality that brought home to the whole population what it was that Germany was aiming at, and crystallized feeling into immediate action. From that moment there was no hesitation. History will probably record that it was the failure of the German General Staff to appreciate how powerful the spirit of liberty could be in countries which had enjoyed political freedom, that was the primary cause of the failure of their original plan. It was the wonderful courage of the Belgian people in refusing a free passage to the heart of a friend, at terrible cost to themselves, that gave the respite which enabled the French to complete their mobilization, and which brought the British into the war before the German plan had been carried through and all resistance in Western Europe had been crushed to the ground.

XI. ABSOLUTISM OR DEMOCRACY

AFTER this examination of history, it is possible to distinguish between the occasion and the cause of the war. The murder of the Archduke, the ultimatum and its time limit, the mobilization of Austria-Hungary or Russia, all these were but the immediate occasions. The true cause was the tragic parting of the ways during 1848-1870, when

Absolutism or Democracy

France and Italy chose the road of popular government, and Germany and Austria-Hungary were driven by force into accepting autocratic rule. The question at issue during those years, says the biographer of Bismarck, had been whether the Crown or Parliament should rule and "the Crown had won not only a physical but a moral victory."

"From that time the confidence of the German people in Parliamentary government was broken. Moreover it was the first time in the history of Europe in which one of these struggles had conclusively ended in the defeat of Parliament. The result of it was to be shown in the history of every country in Europe during the next twenty years. It is the most serious blow that the principle of representative government has yet received."*

Prince Bülow gives the same verdict. "Liberalism," he writes, "in spite of its change of attitude in national questions, has to this day not recovered from the catastrophic defeat which Prince Bismarck inflicted nearly half a century ago on the party of progress which still clung to the ideals and principles of 1848."†

How fatal the triumph of autocracy has been all subsequent history has shown. During the last fifty years the great German people, which had led the world for so long in thought and music, and which still leads it in its capacity for accurate and fearless research and for organized enterprise, has been steadily corrupted. Instead of being made to understand that they were free citizens, and that as free men they were responsible for their country's actions, and that by no jugglery of argument about patriotism could they absolve themselves of that responsibility, Germans were taught that it was the highest citizenship to obey without question the direction of an hereditary caste. Character, the habit of acting under a sense of responsibility for one's actions, is the special, as it is the noblest, product of freedom. The national character of Germany was steadily undermined by the political system inaugurated by Bismarck. The result was inevitable. Prince Bülow, after ten years as Chancellor, despairs of the political cap-

* Headlam, *Life of Bismarck*.

† *Imperial Germany*, p. 120.

The Schism of Europe

acity of his own countrymen. "Despite the abundance of merits," he says, "and the great qualities with which the German nation is endowed, political talent has been denied it." And Mommsen, the historian of Rome, writing in 1903, said of Germany, "There are no longer free citizens."

Autocracy had corrupted German "Kultur" no less than it has corrupted the German people. "Kultur" embodies much that is priceless and noble in the sphere of art and intellect. But it contains also that element of slave morality which Nietzsche's free spirit discerned in his countrymen and denounced with such passionate rhetoric. "Kultur" is no longer the pursuit of beauty and truth wherever they may lead, but the acceptance of German standards of beauty and truth. If they do not prevail by their own virtue, then they must be enforced by the State. That is why, to a modern German, German "Kultur" must be spread by the sword, and why "a place in the sun" means an extension of the German State. "Kultur," in fact, does not fully exist until the State has robbed the individual of his liberty and in return has organized, educated, blue-booked and inspected him into an obedient and useful cog in the great national machine.

Finally the triumph of autocracy in 1871 has led to the fatal doctrine of ascendancy which is the proximate cause of the war. It is inevitable that an autocratic caste should wish to extend its dominion. The only check on the ambition of rulers is the power of the people, who if left to judge for themselves, care little for such things. But the people of Germany, misled by the exceptional features of their own history from 1864 to 1870, corrupted by the malignant teachings of the great governmental machine, and deprived of all chance of developing that political character and self-reliance which is the security for honesty and fair play in public policy, accepted blindly the gospel that it was their destiny, under the direction of the State, to dominate the world by force of arms. They failed to realize that their western neighbours were resisting not Germany but the fatal principle by which the Germans were enslaved. Deserting liberty themselves they soon began to forget or ignore the rights of others and to believe that their State could do no wrong. The worship of the State

Absolutism or Democracy

became almost a new religion, claiming implicit self-sacrifice and implicit obedience from its devotees. Yet in Germany the State is not even the people. It is the Emperor, the Prussian aristocracy, the army and the bureaucracy. It is in their interests, not the interests of the German people, that the gospel of "frightfulness," ascendancy and war has been invoked, and that countless thousands of lives, German and non-German, have been destroyed. That is the terrible truth which emerges from a study of the history of Europe during the last hundred years.

Thus the great war, in its essence, is the time-honoured struggle between the principles of liberty and tyranny, democracy and autocracy. Its first manifestation in history was when the Persian king, determining to allow no peoples to refuse his overlordship and to govern themselves, encountered a spirit such as was unknown in his own enslaved dominions at Thermopylæ, Marathon and Salamis. It was not so much that the great King wanted to rule the Greeks. It was that he could not bear that any people should claim absolute independence of himself and refuse to acknowledge that in the last resort his will was their law. This is exactly what modern Germany, under the impulse of her rulers, has been contending for in Europe.

We must put aside [says General von Bernhardt] "all such notions of equilibrium. In its present distorted form it is opposed to our weightiest interests. The idea of a state system which has common interests in civilization must not, of course, be abandoned, but it must be expanded on a new and more just basis. It is not now a question of a European state system, but of one embracing all the states of the world, in which the equilibrium is established on real factors of power. We must endeavour to obtain in this system our merited position at the head of a federation of Central European States, and thus reduce the imaginary European equilibrium in one way or another to its true value, and correspondingly to increase our own power."

According to this teaching, Germany can tolerate no equal. It is a case of world-dominion or downfall. And Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg admitted the dominance of this idea when he said in 1911 after the set-back at Agadir, "The dominant chord of the passionate feeling which prevails in wide circles is the will of Germany to assert herself in the world with all her strength and capacity."

The Schism of Europe

Such a claim no other nation could admit and still pretend to be a free people. As against the German policy of ascendancy, known as the doctrine of the unity of Europe, the democratic nations, such as England and France, set the doctrine of the balance of power. The doctrine of the balance of power is founded on the principle that nations are free and equal, and are entitled to go their own way and develop along their own lines, so long as they do not aim at enslaving or robbing their neighbours. And it has for a primary object the recognition of law, as expressed in treaties, as the foundation of international relations. The doctrine of the balance of power, indeed, is the doctrine of liberty, equality and fraternity between nations. The doctrine of the unity of Europe, as taught by Prussia, is the doctrine of the ascendancy of one power and the subservience of the rest. The one is the natural outcome of government by the people, the other is the inexorable result of government by an autocratic caste. And it is the question of whether the nations of the Continent shall retain their full freedom, or whether autocratic Germany shall, by defeating them, make it impossible for them to resist her will again, an issue fraught with incalculable results for the world and the progress of mankind, which is being fought out on the grim battlefields of Europe to-day.

But though the dynamic cause of the war has been the instinctive desire of autocratic Germany to destroy liberty in Europe by tolerating no equal to itself, let us not think that no measure of responsibility rests upon the democratic nations of the world and especially ourselves. Just as an autocracy by the law of its own being tends to militarism and the gospel of force, so a democracy tends towards folly and blindness in its external relations. Power rests with the people, and they are so preoccupied with their internal problems, with social reform, the abolition of privilege and the equalization of opportunity, that they wilfully blind themselves to the hard and difficult problems of the outside world. By talking peace they think they can escape the necessity for that resolute and farsighted foreign policy by which, in a world divided into independent sovereign States, peace can alone be maintained. It is a painful truth that, since democracy became a reality in England, the Gov-

ernment has tended to shelter itself behind a kind of Monroe doctrine for the British Empire. This doctrine is called the policy of "avoiding foreign entanglements." Such a policy, if blindly followed, can only lead to disaster, just as our failure fully to face our foreign responsibilities has led to disaster now. The world is one whole, and what goes on in one part is bound sooner or later to react on every other part. We realized this dimly during the early years of this century, as the gospel of military aggression gained greater and greater hold on Germany. But we never faced the full consequences of the situation. Even after the revelation of Germany's true policy in the years 1906-1909, even after Germany at Agadir and by the great Army and Navy Laws of 1912 and 1913 had made it demonstrably clear that she refused to accept Sir Edward Grey's diagnosis, that peace in Europe could be maintained only by nations respecting one another's liberties, we deluded ourselves with false hopes. The charge which history will level against England is not that she has hemmed Germany in and been selfish and grasping. It will rather be that in the face of a manifest plot against democracy and liberty, after overtures of friendliness, supplemented by acts, not promises, of disarmament, had been scornfully rejected, she did not face the facts, make good her preparations, establish definite and avowed relations with other threatened powers, and so make it clear to Germany that she could not make herself the tyrant of Europe by force of arms.

On us the chief responsibility for blindness chiefly rests, for we condemned as alarmists and fools the farsighted prophets who sought to bring home to us what our responsibilities were. But it rests also in some measure on other peoples who are dedicated to the cause of liberty. It rests with Canada, which was not less blind. It rests with Italy, which remained in alliance with an autocratic and reactionary State. And it rests also with the great Republic which most claims to be the home of liberty and which for nearly a hundred years has believed that it could think only of its own affairs and had no responsibility for the maintenance of liberty and justice beyond its own shores. The practical lesson of the war is that the whole trend of democratic policy has been one-sided and blind. In future no nation can afford

The Schism of Europe

to ignore the outside world. Every nation that has self-respect must direct its policy consciously towards the improvement of international relations and must assume the liabilities and obligations which such a policy involves. The consideration, however, of the manner in which this lesson will affect international relations in the future must be reserved for an article in the next number of this review.

When wrong is being done or free men are being enslaved, it is the duty of the strong and honourable man to step in and prevent it, if he can, and if need be by force. Any other course only leads to the triumph of evil. The inevitable tragedy of the victory of force is nowhere more strikingly exemplified than in Germany itself, where, in acquiescing in the forcible establishment of a tyrannical Government in their own case, the German people have gradually lost the sense of liberty themselves, and so have been led to make the supremest sacrifices in order to extend that tyranny over their neighbours. So now our only duty is to spare no effort to defeat the attempt of autocratic Germany to establish the reign of might in place of the reign of liberty throughout Europe. And it is doubly important because on the issue to the conflict will depend not only the liberties of France, Belgium and the minor Powers, and the future peace of the world, but the future of Germany also. As late as 1914, Professor Delbrück, the successor of Treitschke in the chair of history in Berlin University, wrote :

“Anyone who has any familiarity at all with our officers and generals knows that it will take another Sedan, inflicted on us instead of by us, before they will acquiesce in the control of the Army by the German Parliament.”

When once the German autocracy has met its Sedan, the German people, abandoning false dreams of conquest and dominion, may learn the true lesson of the war and take the direction of their own destinies into their own hands. And when that happens, the mainspring of militarism and the Prussian cult of power will be destroyed. For in a democratic State, the State is the people, not a class covetous of dominion and power. And the policy of a people tends to

Absolutism or Democracy

concern itself not with the glory of the State, but with the welfare of the community, and to be guided, not by the immoral principle that power is law, but by the same standards of justice, equality and freedom which it follows in its own internal affairs.

GERMANY AND THE PRUSSIAN SPIRIT

"And yet deliver thou, O Father Zeus, the Sons of the Achæans from under this cloud, and make clear sky above them, and grant to their eyes to see; that so, if it be thy will to slay them, thou slay them in the light."

Thus spake he, and Father Zeus looked down upon him in his sore travail. And forthwith he smote the mist, and drove away the murk from heaven; and the sun shone forth, and the whole face of the battle was made plain.

THE PRAYER OF AJAX IN THE BATTLE
OF THE SHIPS. ILIAD, xvii, 645-650.

AN endeavour is made in the following pages to trace the modern history of the German Empire, to indicate the main ideas which have taken shape in its institutions, and to mark the causes which have brought it into conflict with its three great European neighbours, in particular Great Britain. The method is of necessity summary, and the conclusions rough. No pretence is made of an exhaustive inquiry into the ethical foundations of modern German Imperialism.

It was essential to Europe that the disunion and instability of the German States should be overcome by some effective system of political union; it may have been inevitable, when that union was achieved, that it should lead to a new disturbance in the European equilibrium. Such questions are incapable of answer. All that is suggested here is that the German Empire of to-day, so far from coordinating the older tendencies of German character and intellect, has taken rather the shape of a reaction against what was best and strongest in German culture, its idealism; that the political institutions of the Empire were framed

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

too completely on the autocratic and militarist model to permit of adjustment to the growth of democratic ideas; that the generation bred and disciplined under those institutions has developed, as part of its training, a standard of national conduct and a belief in the national goal which were incompatible from the outset both with the British view of international relations and with the peace of the civilized world; and that the two Empires, British and German, have come in consequence to a life-and-death struggle which is, in part, a conflict of interests, but also, above and beyond all questions of interest, a heroic conflict of ideals.

I. GERMAN IDEALISM

THE name of Germany calls to mind two dissimilar human types. The one, sanctioned by a moribund tradition, is a genial wool-gathering professor in a formidable pair of spectacles, untidy of habit and far from athletic in form, the dedicated slave rather than the possessor of several large notebooks and a collecting-box. We have all laughed at that German professor in our infancy. Like John Bull or Uncle Sam, he is an established type. He was the only kind of German who figured in boys' books of adventure, at any rate till the end of the nineteenth century, and we gave him our affectionate patronage—the sort of patronage a public-school boy in the first eleven would bestow upon an amiable bookworm.

The other type of German is in spirit the absolute antithesis of the professor, though he conceals a strong touch of the professor under his uniform. He is a military figure of imposing build, helmeted, cuirassed and spurred, with upturned moustaches, a commanding eye, and a powerful arm encased in mail. This warrior type has come into existence, so far as the British public is concerned, only during the present century. We have regarded it with increasing dislike and anxiety, as a somewhat uncivilized *parvenu* in the comity of nations. It has, to our eye, an outline of primitive and almost brutal suggestion, like the rudimentary masses favoured by some modern German archi-

German Idealism

ture. Contrasted with the public school type which we prefer, it calls to mind a strong and clever, but ungentlemanly, bully.

Like John Bull or Uncle Sam, these two German figures are, of course, merely the rough types of popular caricature; but like all such types they represent an instinctive popular judgment which is seldom very much astray. In the case of Germany, as in other cases, the two figures are founded on broad truth, and they epitomize together in a very significant way the origin and character of the new German Empire. The transformation of the one into the other is one of the most remarkable events in history. Even so Faust, calling in a dangerous doctor for the trouble of his soul, abandoned his study, his books, his tubes and retorts, his doctor's gown, in order to live the worldly life he had hitherto despised.

Since Europe emerged from the Reformation and entered the era of modern history, German union has always been a living cause with the great majority of the German peoples, but the ideals aspired to through union have undergone a fundamental change in the last half-century. In the new blossoming of European mind which came with the Renaissance the German share was intellectual rather than practical. Coleridge's phrase, "fundamental brainwork," describes better than any other the special bent of the German temperament. Its first great manifestation was in religion. Then, after a period of slow or interrupted growth, it showed its power once more in philosophy, in science, in history, in scholarship; and, combined with a noble strain of imagination and romance, it produced the greatest musicians of all time and two or three of the greatest writers and poets. The traditional words of Hans Sachs's "Hymn Before the Dawn"—chosen by Wagner with the insight of genius as the keynote of the culminating scene in that most German of all German works, *The Master Singers of Nuremberg*—bring with them the very atmosphere of the Germany which emerged in little centres of intense life from the shadows of the mediaeval Empire.

"Awake, 'tis close on dawn of day.
I hear amid the budding may
A nightingale full-hearted sing;

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

O'er hill and dale her voice doth ring.
The Night sinks downward in the west,
From eastward, lo, the Morning makes;
And Dawn in flaming splendour dress'd
Athwart the shadows on us breaks."

The strange passion of romance in the simple old German words will not bear translation; but even the English version, doggerel though it be, may perhaps suggest the touch of symbolism, the visionary aspiration towards a daylight for the eyes of the mind, which lies behind the original. It is significant that Wagner, finishing *The Master Singers* in the decade which saw the German Empire made, begs his countrymen, in Hans Sachs's final exhortation to the citizens of Nuremberg, to forswear foreign and princely influences and hold by the German masters of art.

"The Holy Roman Empire, let it part.
Our strength and stay is Holy German Art."

That, in even looser doggerel, is the last couplet of Hans Sachs's address. To an English audience the sentiment—Art for Empire!—would seem merely ridiculous. To a German audience, even in 1914, it is a natural tribute to the German genius and a stirring reminder of Germany's creative past.

There was nothing of this visionary temper in Elizabethan or in Puritan England any more than in the Great Britain of to-day. With all her poetic and literary achievement, England from the Reformation onwards was turning her chief forces into the practical business of extending and defending her liberties—a severely political object which led step by step to worldwide power. Milton abandoned literature in order to slave as Cromwell's secretary, and returned to poetry only in his old age. There was no "fundamental brainwork" in the methods which established English freedom and British power. Englishmen have always seemed to settle their political affairs, like their legal code, by a kind of rough instinct, meeting practical necessities by practical expedients as they arose. In due course the sum of these practical expedients became the British Constitution and the British Empire—a process which sug-

German Idealism

gests to many historians, especially the German ones, that we achieved our greatness partly by fraud and partly by mistake, and that we are entirely unworthy of it, now as in the past.

This political and practical capacity Germans, with their other great gifts, unfortunately lacked. They have always been creatures of intellect rather than of instinct. Their contribution to European progress, so great in religious and philosophical thought, and in the pursuit of knowledge, has been weak in the practical business of statesmanship. The Reformation—in England very largely a political movement, ending (like everything English) in compromise—was in Germany a profound convulsion of soul, leading to a new intellectual life. Dr. Busch, Bismarck's Boswell, when he wishes, in the preface to his diaries, to fix his master's greatness once and for all, says: "In a hundred years the memory of Prince Bismarck will take a place in the minds of our people *next to that occupied by the Wittenberg doctor.*" Bismarck and Martin Luther—a strange comparison! We could hardly find, among the men who have most influenced English destinies, so violent a contrast of types. Indeed, our greatest men all seem, like Cardinal Wolsey and Oliver Cromwell, to be a mixture of the two.

It was due to these great differences of character and temperament that, while England was building up her Empire, Germany, divided into many States, was making little impression upon the world except in the things of the mind. The world's debt to Germany for thought and knowledge is inestimable; for political science it is small. Germany was a land of dreams. Her peoples from the earliest times had been children of romance, and they became, not only pioneers of thought, but the unequalled masters of certain forms of imaginative art. Of that the mere names of their composers and poets—Grimm and Humperdinck, Schubert and Schumann, Schiller, Heine, Weber, Brahms—are sufficient testimony. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner—no other people has had such genius in the world of blended thought and emotion out of which music springs; and no other people has shown so constantly the power of laborious craftsmanship which musical crea-

The Prussian Autocracy

tion demands. Goethe, who represented in his single work all three of the great movements of German mind—in science, in thought and in romance—was typical of German capacity, and in his attitude to the world a typical German of his own time.

Voltaire's saying that while France ruled the land, and England the sea, Germany ruled the clouds, was therefore profoundly true of the Germany of his day. It was the peculiar feature of the Germany which Napoleon overran that her greatest men were either indifferent, like Goethe, to the violent political upheavals of the period, or else, like Beethoven, moved rather by the abstract ideas evolved in revolutionary France than by any German patriotism. The ideal of that Germany was art and culture, not patriotism. Its vital forces were turned to the production, not of political efficiency or military leadership, but of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, and Goethe's *Faust*.

This was the Germany on which the figure of the genial professor, familiar to caricature, was founded. To it the whole world owes, and has always paid, a steady tribute of affection and gratitude.

II. THE PRUSSIAN AUTOCRACY

THAT Germany, however, for all its power and nobility of mind, was efficient only in the realms of art and knowledge; in politics it was a prey to internal disunion and foreign intrigue. Bismarck, like Wagner, saw in foreign and princely influences the bane of German life, but he judged these influences as a statesman and had other remedies to suggest than devotion to German Art. Bismarck, the mailed warrior and autocrat, Wagner, the poet and revolutionary, are striking examples of the contrast between the practical German mind and the visionary one. Whence came the tradition seized, developed and fixed by Bismarck—the tradition of order, efficiency and positive material aims?

Side by side with the Germany of thought and dreams, there has long been another Germany, the peculiar pos-

session of the kingdom of Prussia, orderly, practical and positive, demanding only a vigorous lead and iron discipline. Europe was first forced to recognize this Germany by Frederick the Great, whose political and military genius raised the Prussia of his day to the rank of a European Power. The same Germany revealed itself, again under Prussian auspices, in the organization which brought about the War of Liberation and strove in company with England for Napoleon's downfall. It won the battle of Leipzig, it took part at Waterloo. And it was this Prussian Germany which rose again, in the second half of the nineteenth century, under Bismarck, Moltke and Roon, overcoming another Napoleon and completing in that process the great structure of the German Empire. Hence comes the warrior type which has gradually ousted the wool-gathering professor of tradition from his place in the public mind.

Bismarck's *Reflections and Reminiscences* have revealed the secrets of the Prussian laboratory in which the project of the modern German Empire was worked out. It was not the creation of a people or of a Parliamentary system, giving gradual and tentative expression to popular ideas and aims, but rather the work of a few great men, who imposed their ideas and aims upon their fellow-countrymen. The desire for union was already indeed widespread when Bismarck came to power, but in the peculiar conditions of the German States it had always gone to waste; and there was cogent reason to believe that for the people and their princes the only road to political efficiency among the nations of the world lay in acceptance of a Prussian hegemony, which was itself the product of autocratic power. "The Gordian knot of German circumstance," wrote Bismarck in his later years,* ". . . could only be cut by the sword; it came to this, that the King of Prussia, conscious or unconscious, and with him the Prussian Army, must be gained for the national cause; whether from the 'Borussian' point of view one regarded the hegemony of Prussia, or from the national point of view the unification of Germany, as the main object; *both aims were co-extensive.*" The creative impulse came, in fact, from an autocratic and mili-

* *Reflections and Reminiscences* of Prince Bismarck (English edition), vol. I, p. 316.

The Prussian Autocracy

tarist system in the hands of one dominating individual. In Prussia this system was traditional, and fully in keeping with the Prussian character; Bismarck merely re-established it at a moment when it was lapsing into weakness and decay. But he had to use sheer force to impose it upon Germany as a whole, first by war against the rival dynasty of the Habsburgs in Austria, and afterwards by leading the German States to the overthrow of the Third Empire in France. The famous phrase in which he foreshadowed these methods on his accession to power in 1862 has become a household word. "The great questions are to be settled," he said in the Prussian Diet in 1862, "not by speeches and majority resolutions, but by blood and iron." The majority in the Prussian Diet refused, in point of fact, to support him; and Bismarck applied his principles at once by framing military budgets and creating a great military machine autocratically under the seal of the King of Prussia. After the war of 1866 against Austria he triumphantly passed an Act of Indemnity. The King objected to the measure, on the ground that it seemed an admission of constitutional impropriety in the course taken by himself and his Minister. Bismarck overcame his objections by showing that Parliament would be confessing its own previous errors, not attributing errors to the King.*

The episode was thoroughly characteristic of the Prussian system, which, as Bismarck held, required this sort of treatment to restore it to efficiency. He had Prussian history on his side. Frederick the Great's Prussia was the creation of drill and discipline, not merely in military matters, but in every department of national life. It was built up by his victories; it was organized by his inordinately paternal administration; it crumbled and fell an easy prey to foreign invasion when his directing hand was withdrawn. The Prussia which defeated Napoleon at Leipzig was likewise the creation of a wonderful administrative machine, imposed upon it by the genius of two or three great men; and it likewise lost power for many years when Napoleon had been overthrown and the pressure of strong leadership relaxed. Bismarck knew his fellow-Prussians, and they responded to his methods with the historic energy of Prussia under discipline. The ideal type of Prussian, Bismarck

* *Reflections and Reminiscences*, vol. II, pp. 76-7.

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

once observed, "goes to meet certain death in the service with the simple words, 'At your orders,' but, if he has to act on his own responsibility, dreads the criticism of his superior officer or of the world more than death, even to the extent of allowing his energy and correct judgment to be impaired by the fear of blame and reproof." Such was the temperament of the whole country.

Bismarck shaped his course accordingly, first with Prussia as his field of action and then with the whole German Union. The spirit in which he set to work is well illustrated by his interview with the King when he accepted the position of Minister-President. The King was proposing to abdicate rather than grant the constitution which was demanded of him by the Diet. Bismarck persuaded him at once to tear the paper up. "I succeeded in convincing him," he writes,* "that, so far as he was concerned, it was not a question of Liberal or Conservative of this or that shade, but rather of monarchical rule or parliamentary government, and that the latter must be avoided at all costs, if even by a period of dictatorship. I said: 'In this situation I shall, even if your Majesty command me to do things which I do not consider right, tell you my opinion quite openly; but if you finally persist in yours, I will rather perish with the King than forsake your Majesty in the contest with parliamentary government.'"

The King responded to these precepts, veiled as assurances, when Bismarck was with him, but he suffered relapses after conversations with the Queen, who had weak constitutional leanings. Such was the effect of a journey to Baden-Baden, soon after this first interview, where the King joined the Queen for her birthday. Bismarck went in pursuit, and "waited for him in the still unfinished railway station, filled with third-class travellers and workmen, seated in the dark on an overturned wheelbarrow." He finally ran the King to earth "by himself in an ordinary first-class carriage," and expounded his views on the way back to Berlin. (He had a weakness for conducting critical conversations with his Sovereign in coupé railway-carriages, presumably because he was secure there against the incursion of "Court influences.") After a time the King inter-

* *Reflections and Reminiscences*, vol. I, p. 293.

The Prussian Autocracy

rupted with the words: "I can perfectly well see where all this will end. Over there, in front of the Opera House, under my windows, they will cut off your head, and mine a little afterwards." Bismarck was unperturbed. "When he was silent"—he records in his Memoirs—"I answered with the short remark, '*Et après, Sire?*' '*Après*, indeed; we shall be dead,' answered the King. 'Yes,' I continued, 'then we shall be dead; but we must all die sooner or later, and can we perish more honourably? . . . Your Majesty must not think of Louis XVI; he lived and died in a condition of mental weakness, and does not present a heroic figure in history. Charles I, on the other hand, will always remain a noble historical character, for after drawing his sword for his rights and losing the battle, he did not hesitate to confirm his royal intent with his blood.'"* This seems to have cheered the King, and, fortunately or unfortunately, his anxieties proved groundless. Prussia at the great cross-roads, two hundred years after England, took the other path decisively. Her intellectuals, and the Liberalism of 1848, were alike swept out of her way.

The combined systems of militarism and autocracy which Bismarck consolidated in Prussia are, in fact, responsible, not merely for the unification of Germany under Prussian hegemony, but for the main significance of the German Empire in the modern world. Bismarck saw no other road to German unity than the defeat of German particularism and of foreign influence by force of arms. In spite of the common German sentiment which pervaded the States as a vague ideal, the German felt his provincial allegiance much more strongly than his common German nationality. "It is as a Prussian, a Hanoverian, a Wurtemberger, a Bavarian, or a Hessian, rather than as a German, that he is disposed to give unequivocal proof of patriotism; and in the lower orders and the parliamentary groups it will be long before it is otherwise."* That was Bismarck's opinion as late as 1891, twenty years after the proclamation of the Empire; the case was naturally much worse in the 'sixties. The particularism of the States was centred upon the local Courts, and these Courts were always struggling to maintain their dignity and interests against each other by the support of foreign Pow-

* *Reflections and Reminiscences*, vol. I, pp. 309-11.

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

ers. It seemed impossible to give practical expression to the ideal of union through the Diet at Frankfurt or by any other popular or parliamentary means. On the other hand, Prussia "could no longer wear unaided on its long narrow figure the panoply which Germany required for its security; that must be equally distributed over all the German peoples." Repeating his famous phrase to the Diet in his Memoirs, Bismarck reiterates in old age his belief that "we could get no nearer the goal by speeches, associations, decisions of majorities; we should be unable to avoid a serious contest, which could only be settled by blood and iron."* In other words, the realization of German unity demanded that the militarism and autocracy of the Prussian system should be fastened upon the rest of Germany by the sword. Blood and iron were thrown into the scales, first against the other great German dynasty, the Habsburgs, and then against the foreign influence of the Third French Empire. Such methods were utterly out of character with Goethe's Germany, the Germany of thought and dreams; but they were natural to the Prussian system, and that system prevailed.

King Frederick William the Fourth of Prussia was elected "hereditary Emperor of the Germans" in 1849. He refused the honour, which would have been quite nominal, on the ground that he could not accept it from the people, but only from his peers. In 1871 King William I crowned himself German Emperor, not on German soil and amid the German people, but surrounded by his army in the conquered capital of a foreign Power. Bismarck, who had welded the Empire upon the anvil of war, ruled it for twenty years as a practically omnipotent Chancellor. He yielded up his control only to another autocrat, the present Emperor, who declared in the heat of his rupture with the great Chancellor that "there is only one master of the nation, and that is I, and I will not abide any other." The sanction of the system thus expressed was the army, which had built the Empire up. The Prussian ideal was riveted upon the German people as the necessary condition of German union, and under the modern Empire policy and people alike have been shaped by Prussian rulers in the rigid Prussian mould.

* *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 309-10.

The Strong Wine of Victory

III. THE STRONG WINE OF VICTORY

HISTORY, then—for English eyes, at least—seems to present two Germanies, one of which has conquered and enslaved the other. The metaphor is, perhaps, too crude. A truer one might picture the older Germany of dreams as a broad and placid river, fed by the clouds and flowing amid vine-clad slopes and legendary rocks from almost forgotten mountains, like the German Rhine; while Prussia would be a rapid glacier-torrent, which has carried the color and temperature of ice into the warm bed of the older stream.

The Germany of the twentieth century, however, is not two but one. The currents have mingled their waters, and the Prussian torrent now has the depth and volume of the whole main-stream of German thought.

It is true, of course, that the Empire is a union of twenty-six States, and that forty years of association under the Empire has not obliterated the differences of many centuries—particularly that between the harder Germans of the North and East, and the softer Germans of the South and West. These States live their own lives in many important respects; it is, indeed, one of the strengths of modern Germany that it contains so many flourishing centres of provincial activity. It combines, for instance, the most rigid autocracies with fairly advanced representative systems, and ideas are often expressed with weight in provincial assemblies which consort ill with the absolute militarist policy of united Germany.

Nothing is more difficult for foreign observers than to estimate the strength of cross-currents such as these. The Germans are notoriously incapable of interpreting such factors in the system of the British Empire, which they have long believed to be on the point of disruption; and it is better that Englishmen should venture no opinions on the disruptive elements in German society. What is absolutely certain is that neither provincial particularism nor political differences have greatly affected the development of German policy since 1871 to 1914. The lead has been Prussian throughout, and Germany as a whole has followed that lead

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

with characteristic thoroughness. Never has a national policy been so laboriously interpreted and expounded and justified. In the realm of theory it has been set forth as a new revelation, of paramount importance to the world. In the realm of action its necessities have been worked out to the minutest detail, and it has been equipped with every possible weapon in the armory of modern States. Religion, science and philosophy have been called in aid to moralize and spread its power. German thinkers and historians live no longer in the clouds. They are the advance guard of the German armies and fleets, preaching conquest and dominion as the highest and most worthy of human creeds.

There is in all this movement the violence of a great reaction of mind. Bismarck's achievements, carried through by an amazing combination of consummate diplomacy and ruthless force, captured and absorbed his fellow-countrymen by sheer success. It has been said of the German people by one of themselves that ever since 1871 they have been *sieges-trunken*, drunk with victory. The saying is, perhaps, unjust in the cruder sense, for their belief in their own invincibility has often been shot with moments of panic regarding English or Russian aims; but it is absolutely true in the sense that Bismarck's victorious career set the greater part of the nation in revolt against the visionary, intellectual, ineffectual traditions of its past and turned its whole energy into the cult of positive, material aims. Philosophers, historians, professors, teachers of every grade, writers of every class—every influence, in fact, which could shape opinion amongst the adult population and school the mind of the young, has been concentrated upon the national cause, preaching it as the world-wide dominance of German culture to be achieved by the absolute dominance of German arms. "All which other nations attained in centuries of natural development—political union, colonial possessions, naval power, international trade—was denied to our nation until quite recently. What we now wish to attain must be *fought for*, and won, against a superior force of hostile interests and Powers."* That is the utterance of a German soldier, but it represents the creed which is inculcated in every German university and school.

* *Germany and the Next War*. By General von Bernhardt, p. 81.

The Strong Wine of Victory

It is too late now to question, as many English observers of Germany in the past ten years have sought to do, the immense influence of this teaching upon the German nation. Every great movement in Germany since Napoleonic times has been preceded by just such a campaign in German lecture-rooms. It is part of the German people's inheritance, and also of its strength, that it responds with enthusiasm to what Englishmen might regard as literary and academic ideas. The aims of the present have thus been grafted upon the grandeurs of the past in such a way that the great procession of heroic figures in the mediaeval Empire, and the splendid pioneers of German intellect in the period between the mediaeval Empire and the modern one, are blended in the visions of the youth of to-day. The race, he sees, was first great in action and afterwards great in thought; both these greatnesses, he ardently believes, are to be combined in its future career. Goethe's Germany and Fichte's Germany are transfused and changed. Berlin has conquered Weimar, and Weimar has transformed Berlin. For all the provincial differences of the German people, the cult of forcible expansion is their central and dominating ideal. In the new generation since 1870 it represents a mass of vital energy which has all flowed steadily into the Prussian mould. It is the real driving-force in German life, the secret of the tremendous organization of warlike power with which the British Empire is struggling now.

There is thus a fundamental difference of character between the British and the German Empires, which largely explains the difference, now so palpable, between their methods and aims. The German Empire was raised like a lighthouse, the work of less than a decade, the plan of a single great mind. The British Empire has grown like a coral-island, without a plan. The character of the German Empire was fixed by the man who made it, and by the State out of which he came. The character of the British Empire has been shaped by the common strivings and instincts of generations of Englishmen. It is like the English Common Law, built up gradually by practical experience, so that every principle is merely a generalization from common-sense judgments in particular instances and represents the average feeling of average Englishmen all down the centuries. Com-

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

pared with this the German system is a code of law, worked out on principles which a few despotic law-givers have laid down.

The English mind responds instinctively to the claim of loyalty from King and Commonwealth, but uncontrolled authority is repugnant to it. The democratic sense of personal independence is as necessary to all British peoples as the air which they breathe. It is, in fact, to their corporate political existence exactly what air is to their lungs. A British citizen must feel that he has an equal voice with every other citizen in the government which he obeys. With every other citizen he can say *l'état, c'est moi*. Without this sanction no British Government can exist. In the German system, as framed by its Prussian law-givers, precisely the reverse is the case. The State is something apart from the mind and conscience of the average citizen; he must simply obey it for his own good and that of the Fatherland. Criticism is indeed permitted to him, and organs are provided in which criticism may be heard; but none of these factors modify the fundamental principle of authority on which the State is based. The nation, as one of the most careful and sympathetic writers on Germany has recently pointed out, is "to all intents and purposes, outside the government of the country."* The habit of submission to its rulers is in its blood.

The Prussian deference to authority, the Prussian capacity for discipline, the Prussian concentration on material aims—these are the leading principles of the German Empire-State. Foreign as they were in some respects to the other peoples of Germany, they have been accepted because of their success. The whole nation reacted against its past after the victories of 1866 and 1870, and the potent organization of the State seized upon that reaction and stamped its character on the new generation which has since arisen. There can be no question of the fundamental unity of the people in the present war. The moment has come which they have been taught from their cradles to expect, and they believe their cause to be just. Democracy is the higher system and it will win; but it fights at a great disadvantage against such a conscious national machine as now obeys the Head of the Prussian hegemony.

* *The Evolution of Modern Germany*. By W. H. Dawson, p. 430.

Bismarck's Legacy

IV. BISMARCK'S LEGACY

THE policy of "blood and iron" had a purpose and a justification in Bismarck's first years as Minister-President which disappeared entirely after the proclamation of the Empire. Bismarck, as the preceding section has shown, conceived himself to be dealing with a Germany so weak in purpose and disunited in policy that only the strong hand of Prussia, imposing union by the sword, could rescue it from the failures and disasters of the past two centuries. He had to deal, first, with the historic rivalry of the German dynasties, and afterwards with the disintegrating policy of foreign Powers, amongst which the Third French Empire was much the most dangerous. These two main objects justified in his mind the war of 1866 against Austria and the war of 1870 against Napoleon the Third. Regarded from German premises the case is very strong, and it should not be confused by criticism of Bismarck's method—his cynicism, his duplicity, his ruthless use of force. These characteristics founded indeed a sinister tradition for the Empire which he made, but they do not vitally affect the moral argument for his main policy from 1862 to 1871. The wars which he then waged he could not unjustly regard as wars of liberation, inevitable if freedom and unity were ever to be permanently secured for the central European system of German States.

There is, on the other hand, every reason for questioning the merits of the constitutional structure which those wars were waged to raise. The case against the German Empire, even as Bismarck conceived it, is something much broader and deeper than the tradition of cynical diplomacy which he bequeathed to it. Western civilization—if, as we of the British Empire believe, the cause of civilization is bound up with that of representative government—had much to dread in certain features of the constitutional system which Prussia imposed upon united Germany, and Bismarck himself was fully conscious of them. On the one hand, the Prussian idea of government, as applied to the German Empire, was an almost complete negation of the constitutional and democratic tendencies of the age—a system bound to lead to internal instability and unrest. On the other hand, it gave

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

untrammelled authority to an enormous military machine, the natural tendency of which towards aggression and adventure was sure to be enhanced by fear of political change within. Bismarck's own Memoirs contain many references of weight to the double menace which this system involved. His reflections on universal suffrage, and the fact that he adopted it for the Imperial Lower House, show him perfectly alive to the power of the democratic movement, although, in theory, he had little sympathy with it. His allusions to the army and the military chiefs display an even keener appreciation of their inherent tendencies, which he loved but strove to restrain. He built as best he could, but the equilibrium of his structure required for its maintenance and extension hands no less skilful than his own. Before he died, he saw it passing into hands of whose competence he was far from sure.

Not only military equipment [he writes in old age] but also a correct political eye will be required to guide the German ship of state through the currents of coalitions to which we are exposed in consequence of our geographical position and our previous history. . . . Former rulers looked more to the capacity than the obedience of their advisers; if obedience alone is the criterion, then demands will be made on the general ability of the monarch which even Frederick the Great himself would not satisfy, although in his time politics both in war and peace were less difficult than they are to-day.*

The diplomatic correspondence lately published by Great Britain, France, Russia and Belgium, and the progressive revelations of Italy's experience at the hands of her two allies, are sufficient evidence of the extent to which German diplomacy, under its present inspiration, has lost the "correct political eye"; and though Bismarck warned his country against that danger, his statesmanship must take a great part of the blame. It is the fault of all autocratic work like that of Bismarck or Napoleon that it depends on a succession of Bismarcks and Napoleons for permanence. Bismarck's Empire—for it is his—has at last exhibited the defects of its origin for all the world to see. His statesmanship cannot be absolved of responsibility for the events of 1914; but he himself was at least aware of the danger and concentrated with untiring resource upon the task of averting it so long as he had power.

* *Reflections and Reminiscences*, vol. II, p. 287.

Bismarck's Legacy

In no department of his work was this more constantly apparent than in his foreign policy. The history of his diplomacy is long and tortuous; but a very few quotations from his records will serve to show how entirely contrary to his teaching is the policy which the Empire is following to-day.

Like Frederick the Great, his ablest predecessor, Bismarck had the priceless instinct of when and where to stop. When Frederick's advisers urged him to proceed from Prussian consolidation to the Imperial Crown of Germany, he answered, "No, that would be too awkward a burden." Bismarck likewise was cautious and practical in his ambition. He proves it constantly in his own rise to power, and the same sagacity afterwards informs his policy. When, for instance, in the early weeks of the campaign of 1870, the idea of annexing Alsace and Lorraine occurs to him, the primary reason is, not conquest, but consolidation. He says with truth that through those provinces in the main France has carried on her traditional harrying of Germany. The great fortresses of Metz and Strassburg are necessary, he contends, as bulwarks against French aggression. And Busch, his confidential scribe, is instructed to set out the following statement of his opinions:

The danger does not lie in Bonapartism, although the latter must rely chiefly upon Chauvinist sentiment. It consists in *the incurable arrogance of that portion of the French people which gives the tone to the whole country*. This trait in the French national character, which will guide the policy of every dynasty, whatever name it may bear and even of a republic, will constantly lead to encroachments upon peaceful neighbours. Our victories, to bear fruit, must lead to an actual improvement of our frontier defences against this restless neighbour. Whoever wishes to see the diminution of military burdens in Europe, or desires such a peace as would permit thereof, must look not to moral but to material guarantees as a solid and permanent barrier against the French lust of conquest; in other words, it should in future be made as difficult as possible for France to invade South Germany with a comparatively small force, *and even in peace to compel the South Germans, through the apprehension of such attack, to be always reckoning with the French Government*. Our present task is to secure South Germany by providing it with a defensible frontier. To fulfil that task is to liberate Germany, that is, to complete the work of the war of liberation in 1813 and 1814.*

* *Bismarck: Some Secret Pages in His History*. By Dr. Moritz Busch, vol. I, p. 124.

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

The French Government might well adopt Bismarck's own words as a statement of its present case against Germany.

Bismarck was, of course, a master of statement suited to European consumption, but the fundamental justice of his argument—if not the entire sincerity of its expression—is proved by his often reiterated views upon the dangers of the German situation between France and Russia. A joint attack by those two Powers upon the eastern and western frontiers was the contingency which he labored without ceasing to make impossible; but given that security, he had no mind for policies of aggrandisement directed against either of them. The alliance with Austria-Hungary and with Italy was not, moreover, in his opinion a sufficient guarantee against the dreaded contingency; he reinforced it therefore with the famous “insurance treaty” with Russia. A conversation on Russia in 1888, towards the end of his days as Chancellor, is recorded by Busch, which makes his views upon the folly of war against France and Russia abundantly plain.

It is not yet certain [he says to Busch in that year] that Russia would take up arms against us, if we were again to be attacked by the French; but if the Russians were to declare war upon us, the French would certainly join them immediately, and after all, in such a war, we should not be so very certain to win, while it would be a great misfortune even if it were victorious, as in any case we should lose a great deal of blood and treasure, and also suffer considerable indirect damage through the interruption of work and trade, and we should never be able to take anything from the French or Russians that would compensate us for our losses. It is only the English who would benefit by it.*

The same idea is constantly recurring in his Memoirs. “Count Shuvaloff,” he observes in the course of his chapter on the Triple Alliance, “was perfectly right when he said that the idea of coalitions gave me nightmares.” That nightmare was, in fact, one of his chief oppressions when he resigned the reins of policy to the present Emperor.

The name he gave himself of “honest broker” among the European Powers was, therefore, no misnomer so far as his intentions were concerned. “Germany,” he writes in 1891, “is perhaps the single Great Power in Europe which is not

* Busch, vol. III, p. 182.

Bismarck's Legacy

tempted by any objects which can only be attained by a successful war. It is our interest to maintain peace, while without exception our continental neighbors have wishes, either secret or officially avowed, which cannot be fulfilled except by war. We must direct our policy in accordance with these facts—that is, we must do our best to prevent war or to limit it.” Whatever kind of broker he may have been, he was at least, on solid grounds of self-interest, not a predatory one.

On the other hand, if judged by his methods, his “honesty” is hard to sustain. There was scarcely any form of deceit and subterfuge from which he seems to have shrunk at any time in order to gain his ends. Busch, his “little archer,” details with relish the many poisoned arrows which he launched in the Press at Bismarck’s command. A great man, as put on record by his valet, is doubtless at a disadvantage for which allowances should be made; but the most famous instance of his unscrupulousness, the doctoring of the Ems telegram and the sending of it to the Press in the mutilated form, is recorded without apology in the Memoirs by his own hand. It was a process of “editing” which, as Moltke said at the time, turned a note of parley into a note of defiance, and it led directly to the French declaration of war. However inevitable that war may have been, however justifiable its purpose on the German side, no English statesman’s reputation could have survived the exposure of such an abuse of international canons.

Bismarck, however, and his two accomplices in the deceit, Moltke and Roon, had absolutely no qualms. The three were dining together, in low spirits, when the telegram arrived, and Bismarck proceeded to convert it from a harmless notification into “a red rag to the Gallic bull.” He expounded the project to his friends, and instantly produced in them a joyous mood, the “liveliness” of which surprised him.

They had suddenly recovered their pleasure in eating and drinking, and spoke in a more cheerful vein. Roon said: “*Our God of old lives still* and will not let us perish in disgrace.” Moltke so far relinquished his passive equanimity that, glancing up joyously towards the ceiling and abandoning his usual punctiliousness of speech, he smote his hand upon his breast and said: “If I may but live to

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

lead our armies in such a war, then the devil may come directly afterwards and fetch away my old carcass.”*

It is an engaging picture.

Unhappily the unscrupulousness of Bismarck's diplomacy has left a deeper impression upon the Wilhelmstrasse than its sagacity. While the lines of his policy have been abandoned, his methods have been retained and developed to a point which hardly requires more illustration than the recent official publication of the correspondence between the German Ambassador in London and his Government. In this a telegram of vital importance is given without the correction by which the Ambassador immediately followed it up, explaining that the telegram in question was the result of a misunderstanding and that the error was his own, not the British Government's. On the strength of this confusion and suppression the world is invited to condemn Great Britain's perfidy—a curious sequel to Bismarck's action in publishing the draft Belgian treaty in 1870 in order to establish the perfidy of France.

Bismarck never seems to have regretted this aspect of his diplomatic teaching, but he always refused to admit in his later years that a statesman would be justified in forcing a war which he regarded as inevitable. The passage in the Memoirs in which he records this opinion is of striking interest now, for it shows his apprehension of militarist influence in the German system when once his controlling hand was withdrawn. He is discussing Moltke's "love of combat," and turns to the question whether diplomacy can ever be justified in deliberately causing war.

I have always opposed the theory which says "yes"; not only at the Luxemburg period, but likewise subsequently for twenty years, *in the conviction that even victorious wars cannot be justified unless they are forced upon one, and that one cannot see the cards of Providence far enough ahead to anticipate historical development according to one's own calculation.* It is natural that in the staff of the army not only younger active officers, but likewise experienced strategists, should feel the need of turning to account the efficiency of the troops led by them and their own capacity to lead, and of making them prominent in history. It would be a matter of regret if this effect of the military spirit did not exist in the army; the task of keeping its results within such limits as the nation's need of peace can justly

* *Reflections and Reminiscences*, vol. II, p. 100.

Bureaucracy and Militarism

claim is the duty of the political, not the military heads, of the State. That at the time of the Luxemburg question, during the crisis of 1878, invented by Gortchakoff and France, and even down to the most recent times, the staff and its leaders have allowed themselves to be led astray and to endanger peace, lies in the very spirit of the institution, which I would not forego. It only becomes dangerous under a monarch whose policy lacks sense of proportion and power to resist one-sided and constitutionally unjustifiable influences.

The centenary of Bismarck's birth was to be celebrated in Germany with becoming reverence in 1915. With all the homage they have paid him, it is strange to reflect how far his countrymen have traveled from the purpose and principle of his life's work.

V. BUREAUCRACY AND MILITARISM

BISMARCK'S cult of power, his disbelief in all but material forces, his cynicism, his lack of scruple, his brutality—these things indeed the German people have taken to their hearts and exalted like a religion. But his practical vision of a "satiated" Germany, in peace with her neighbors and content to guard the greatness which he had given her—that has been thrown to the winds for new ambitions which could only be advanced by constant aggression and, if need were, war.

Bismarck's German policy depended on two conditions for success. It was essential on the one hand that the constitutional system of the Empire should provide some adequate means of expression for the main body of public opinion in internal politics. Failing that, the army and the bureaucracy were bound to exercise an absolutely decisive influence on national policy, and those two bodies would only be irritated into antagonism and dangerous unrest by the irresponsible criticism of the champions of popular right. It was equally essential, on the other hand, that the necessary economic expansion of the country should be pursued by the ordinary methods of trade competition, not by a State policy involving menace and aggression against other Powers.

Neither condition has been fulfilled.

The Germany of 1870-1914 has been a Federation in which one undemocratic State has been practically omnipo-

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

tent. Prussian domination has been assured by the unlimited powers of the King-Emperor, by the complete control exercised by Prussia over the Federal Council (which governs all legislation), and by the increasing sense, even in the southern States, of the material and military advantages of leaving things as they are. The Parliamentary system is an absurdity. The Reichstag is elected on an ultra-democratic suffrage; if the distribution of seats were not grotesquely anomalous, it would be overwhelmingly Socialist. The result is that it looks revolutionary, while it is, in fact, impotent. Ministers are not responsible to it, but are merely heads of departments. In practice, therefore, Reichstag Socialism—though in itself of a very harmless Whig character—helps reaction by presenting a terrible picture of the alternative to military and bureaucratic control. Meanwhile Prussia, which is two-thirds of Germany, has a State Parliament elected on an ancient plutocratic franchise, which makes the Agrarian and Clerical interests absolutely supreme. This solid block of interests is the very basis of the Prussian system and of the Hohenzollern dynasty, and it has been driven more and more into the arms of militarism by fear of the political revolution which its connection with the Imperial system seems to threaten.

This ill-balanced constitution was patched up in a hurry in 1870-1. It was not shaped, like British institutions, in accordance with long and proved experience of popular feeling and administrative necessities. On the contrary, it was devised by one controlling mind, which framed it to suit its own methods of government and views of national policy. Bismarck could play off the military machine, the bureaucracy and the Parliaments against each other to suit his notions of immediate expediency. The constitution was an instrument built for a great *virtuoso*, and it could not be altered when conditions changed and the great *virtuoso* had gone. All the internal crises of recent years have been vehement assaults upon the constitution, but these assaults have been powerless; partly because of the strength of the Prussian governing forces and traditions, backed by the whole landed interest; partly because of the feebleness of all parliamentary parties, which have no tradition except to be the tools of Ministers; and partly because the only real

Bureaucracy and Militarism

forces of opposition have been driven into the extreme posture of enemies of the State.

German opinion has therefore been unable to develop—and much less, to express itself—on any but military, materialist and megalomaniac lines. These aspirations it could find most admirably represented in the army and the bureaucracy, which thus acquired a sanction like that of representative institutions elsewhere; all other aspirations were doomed to barrenness from birth.

It is useless to discuss what course a freer Germany might have taken; she has not, in fact, been free to take any other course. Political education has been impossible, and the great departments have practically done what they chose. The vast increases of expenditure for the Army and Navy have indeed been stage-managed in appropriate ways—after the Morocco crisis by Press campaigns against England and France, and after the Balkan wars by Press campaigns against Russia. But these campaigns were only needed to stir an opinion already brewed in the great vats of Prussian policy—the schools, the universities, the army, the bureaucratic machine. The German people do not make their Government; their Government makes them.

It was only another inevitable result of these constitutional and political conditions that the progress of economic expansion should take the character of a forcible campaign against all other nations. There was certainly no justification for that campaign in economic conditions, and the leaders of German thought have long abandoned the economic argument for the need of expansion by arms. There is, for instance, practically no emigration from Germany; on the contrary, she imports a great deal of foreign labor, and the density of her population to the square mile is less than half that of England or Belgium. Her economic necessities therefore resolve themselves into raw materials for her industries, markets for her manufactures, and reinforcements to her food-supply. These are not conditions compelling any choice between “world-dominion or downfall”—the alternatives which, since Bismarck’s retirement, her leaders have long presented to her as absolutely exhaustive. In particular, they necessitate no rivalry with free-trade England, who not only opens her own market to Germany, but main-

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

tains equality for the commerce of all nations in her Dependencies and stands throughout the world for the policy of the "open door." If business Germany, bourgeois Germany and working-class Germany has thrown itself into the policy of the Prussian Government, the cause does not lie in economic pressure of any serious kind. It lies, on the contrary, in the simple fact that the German industrial and commercial classes bear the stamp, like everything else in Germany, of an omnipotent educational machine. The paternalism of Prussian administration comes naturally to them. Business is merely another section of the great State organism. It is fostered, organized and directed by the governing powers, and those who conduct it take their inspiration from the same alcoholic vats as the rest of the nation—from the schools, the universities, the army, the bureaucratic machine.

It is very difficult to see how Bismarck's Empire could have saved itself from this intoxication and followed the sober courses which he enjoined. The nation as it now is seems to be the inevitable product of the system which he bequeathed, and he may perhaps have grumbled the more in his old age from secret anxieties as to the durability of his handiwork. The key to practically everything intolerable in modern Germany is Prussian dominance. Bismarck fastened this Prussian autocracy, with its reactionary and militarist discipline, upon the whole German people, and gave it unassailable power over the national destiny. The German of all kinds is docile to authority; he accepts, indeed he demands, the guidance of the State. Professional Germany, scientific Germany, scholarly Germany, literary Germany, even artistic Germany—as witness modern German architecture—caught in the reaction from national inefficiency and dominated by the success of Prussian leadership in two wars, have taken the Prussian mould as completely as the army of the bureaucracy. Even social reform is no exception; as pursued in Germany, it is one of the most potent instruments of State control which Prussian policy has devised. Human beings who concentrate on one idea develop a terrible efficiency against their fellow-men. Germany as an Empire-State has done the same thing.

That acute American observer, Mr. Price Collier, who spent a part of his youth in a German university and re-

The Religion of War

turned to study Germany only a year ago, has drawn a vivid picture of the externals of this national docility, and collected some astonishing instances of its results. It seems, for instance, from a recent volume by a distinguished German prison official, that one out of every twelve persons now living in Germany has been convicted of some offence. This is not that Germans are a criminal or disorderly people—far from it; it is merely that they are surrounded by regulations from their first walk outside a perambulator, or in one, to their graves. And “quite right, too,” says Mr. Price Collier; they go to pieces, like Bismarck’s Prussian lieutenant, without it. “Quite right to hang the German world with the sign *Verboten*; quite right to distribute titles and medals and orders, for the more they are uniformed and decorated and ticketed and drilled and taken care of, the better they like it. Over-organization has brought this about. Their theories have hardened into a veritable imprisonment of the will.”

Under Prussian influence German theories have indeed hardened into a drilled and disciplined national monomania. They have now plunged Europe into the most terrible of all wars in history, and only war has revealed how powerful and how demoralizing their teaching has been.

VI. THE RELIGION OF WAR

THE root of all modern German policy is a belief in material power, expressed in armaments. It is derived in the main from Bismarck’s confidence in “blood and iron,” and from Bismarck’s reiterated statement that the international position of every people depends on material, not moral, guarantees.

This was Bismarck’s theory, but his practice showed a lively appreciation of the fact that material power, however great, cannot afford to disregard the force of moral ideas. No statesman labored harder to secure his country in the good opinion of the world.

Bismarck’s successors at the helm of the German ship have flung those qualifications into the sea. Power is now the sole consideration—“the end-all and be-all of a State.”*

* *Germany and the Next War*. By General von Bernhardt, p. 40.

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

"The morality of the State," says the same popular writer, "must be judged by the nature and *raison d'être* of the State, and not of the individual citizen." The State is thus exalted as something separate from the mind and conscience of its citizens, a non-moral and predatory organism seeking only a strength superior to that of other States. Given that superiority, everything else will be added unto it, and its culture, throned on bayonets, will prevail. The creed of modern Germany not merely postulates material power as necessary to a State, if it is to maintain its civilization and its distinctive cast of moral ideas; but it sets material power above all other factors whatsoever, and makes morality subservient to that governing idea.

There is, of course, no absolute standard of morality in international relations; and the German theory may no doubt be effectively illustrated by incidents in the practice of even the most enlightened States in their dealings with less powerful neighbors. But it is neither Pharisaical nor far-fetched to point out that the British political system has been built up on presumptions of an utterly different kind to these modern German canons. Englishmen are not strong in theory; but their practice in the gradual development of their institutions—first in England and then through kindred stocks throughout the world—has been to test the State by its capacity to produce self-respecting and independent citizens. It is the English belief that goodness in a citizen, as in a human being, involves the power to choose between one course and another. In other words, it is not the business of the State to mould the general will of its citizens, but to represent it; and that State is the best which carries with it in all its activities, at home and abroad, the mind and conscience, freely developed, of the greatest number of citizens. In such a State the views, the feelings and the moral ideas of individual citizens do largely influence its policy; the personal judgment, for instance, of Edmund Burke regarding the actions of Warren Hastings is ultimately expressed in the temper of British Government in India. And this same moral sanction influences its relations with foreign Governments, since British statesmen, with all their authority when once office has been accorded them, are the creatures of British opinion and responsible to it for their use of national power.

The Religion of War

The cult of power in Germany has eliminated all these influences or presumptions; and so far is the conscience of Germans as individuals from affecting the actions of the State, that the State, on the contrary, moulds the whole mind of the average German in accordance with its aims. The State is thus above all criticism, and no moral barriers are allowed to thwart its "will to power." As a claimant for power, it has found itself a late-comer among the strong peoples of Europe. Germany was dreaming while other nations, and England in particular, were acquiring vast properties in different parts of the earth. She cannot play her part in the world, the part due to German mind and energy, without acquiring a similar dominion; and since the path of peaceful acquisition is closed to her—or at any rate not sufficiently open to gratify her ambition as rapidly and extensively as she desires—she must force her way by violence.

In accordance with these ambitions Germany has developed within the last twenty-five years an entirely new religion of war. It is based, not on Bismarck, who in theory at least repudiated it, but on the old Prussian military authorities, and in particular on Clausewitz. To Clausewitz war was merely "a continuation of policy," to be invoked whenever expedient. He was a soldier of the Napoleonic era, and though he fought against Napoleon as a good Prussian, he regarded Napoleonic methods as the basis, not merely of successful war, but of all sound statesmanship. The methods by which German union was achieved between 1866 and 1871 have seemed to modern Germans to establish the wisdom of Clausewitz above all other wisdoms. A strong Prussian school had long inculcated this warlike philosophy. In the reaction after 1871 it was taken up under Prussian inspiration and gradually fitted out with an immense paraphernalia of historical, scientific and ethical arguments. There is no intellectual life in German universities which is not colored by this teaching. Treitschke, the great historian of Prussian achievement and the relentless enemy of England, is only the best known of a multitude of influences, great and small, which have carried the propaganda through the whole German system. A recent observer has found that an average of seven hundred books is published annually in Germany dealing with the subject of war. West-

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

ern civilization has come to regard war as an evil to be avoided by every resource of statesmanship—the last dread arbitrament when every other means of settlement has failed. German thought meanwhile has been taking exactly the opposite course, and has preached war as the necessary instrument of policy, good as a means and good in itself, to be used without scruple whenever the national interest may be advanced thereby, without regard to human loss or suffering. The governing stocks of humanity, it holds with some crude passages in Nietzsche, are above humane considerations.

These men are, in reference to what is outside their circle (where the foreign element, or foreign country, begins), not much better than beasts of prey. . . . They feel that in the wilderness they can revert to the beast of prey conscience; like jubilant monsters who perhaps come with bravado from a ghastly bout of murder, arson, rape and torture. . . . It is impossible not to recognize at the core of all these races the magnificent blonde brute, avidly rampant for spoil and victory.*

The reaction to this cult of dominion by force over other nations has told of necessity on Bismarck's cautious scheme of foreign policy. In particular, Bismarck's principle of securing national interests by diplomatic arrangements creating a balance of power—this historic English policy and the only policy of any rational statesmanship which aims at avoiding war—has been cast aside in favour of constant endeavors to create a German diplomatic hegemony. "An attempt has been made," says General von Bernhardt, ignoring Bismarck's sanction for that policy, "to produce a real equilibrium by special alliances. One result only has been obtained—the hindrance of the free development of the nations in general, and of Germany in particular. This is an unsound condition."† If "free development" means the advance of Germany towards European hegemony, the argument is unanswerable; and the further consideration that such "free development" must mean war in no way weakens General von Bernhardt's desire for it. "We must put aside," he writes, "all notions of equilibrium."

* Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals* (Complete English Edition, vol. xiii.), pp. 39-40.

† *Germany and the Next War*, p. 108.

The Religion of War

From these premises it is a very short step to the complete abandonment of Bismarck's whole scheme of security, and General von Bernhardi makes it without flinching. The Triple Alliance, he says, is inadequate because of its "purely defensive character." It ignores "the necessary development of events," and "does not guarantee to any of its members help in the prosecution of their essential interests."* It is necessary, therefore, for Germany to take the initiative and establish a new position for herself at the head, if possible, of a dominant Federation of Central European States. Her destiny demands this process of aggrandizement; it must be achieved, if necessary, by force; it must proceed in any case without regard for any State which stands in Germany's way. In particular, Germany "*must square her account*" with France—they are the General's own italics—and since France will not accept an inferior position for her diplomacy, "the matter must be settled by force of arms." The alternatives before Germany are "world-power or downfall." She must dominate Europe, and through Europe, the world, since thus alone can she discharge her "great duties of the future," and "stamp a large part of humanity with the impress of the German spirit."†

General von Bernhardi is no mere fire-eater of the mess-room, as many British and American critics were fain to believe until a few short weeks ago. He is typical of a movement which is at the root of the whole political and military system of the German Empire. In the heat of European rivalry English evidence upon these facts has sometimes been taken, even in the British Dominions, as of doubtful reliability; but Americans have borne no less striking witness to their actuality. Mr. Price Collier's concluding chapters in *Germany and the Germans* is a masterly summary of their significance. Professor Usher, of Washington University, is even more explicit in his book on *Pan-Germanism*, published last year. "The Germans," he says there, "aim at nothing less than the domination of Europe and of the world by the Germanic race," and he brushes aside the contention that this ambition is a transient one, imposed by a few strong personalities and evoking no popular response in the Ger-

* *Ibid.*, p. 85.

† *Germany and the Next War*. See the whole chapter headed "World-power or Downfall," pp. 82-114.

Germany and the Prussian Spirit

man people. "No doubt, a few men only know the full details of the plans for the realization of this stupendous enterprise, but the whole nation is none the less fired by their spirit, and is working as a unit in accordance with their directions." Prussia and the Prussian system have, indeed, drugged the mind and conscience of the entire nation like a species of alcoholic poisoning.

Professor Usher calls attention to one salient aspect of the propaganda which has not been much considered hitherto by the political or the business world outside Germany. It deserves quotation—the last which space permits—both as a striking example of the denial of all conventional ethics which is implicit in German Imperialism and also as an indication of Germany's strongest and bitterest antagonism. The idea is nothing less than the absolute repudiation of Germany's liabilities, as a debtor nation, to her creditors. The blow is, of course, aimed principally at England:

The world has paid her tribute, but the world need continue to pay that tribute only so long as it wishes. The moment the borrowers refuse longer to recognize the validity of her claims upon their revenues and incomes and begin to realize that they hold, with a clutch which she cannot loosen, the actual substance of wealth, then they will begin to see that her wealth is not real, but depends purely upon their willingness to continue to pay her revenue, which they may stop paying her at any moment without suffering any consequences. To be sure, such notions as these presume the violation of every notion of commercial morality, and expediency at present existing in the world, but, as the Germans say, *if they were violated*, what could England and France possibly do to avert destruction? It is true, they admit, that such a wholesale repudiation of debts would undoubtedly make it difficult for nations to borrow from each other for some time to come, but, they retort, if such a repudiation took place, the debtor nations would not need to borrow money for generations to come.*

The ultimate aim of German Imperialism is indeed nothing less than the destruction of British power, the humiliation of England, and the partition of the British Empire. From Treitschke downwards that idea has been an absorbing preoccupation of German historians, and it has become ingrained in the German view of German destiny. The British Empire, in German eyes, sprawls across the world with an

* *Pan-Germanism*. By Professor Roland G. Usher, pp. 91-2.

The Religion of War

appearance of strength which is not merely fallacious but immoral, because it is not based on adequate human quality. It is not the product of sovereign mind or sterling character; it is, on the contrary, an accident, partly of history, partly of geographical situation. It has shown itself incapable of organizing its vast possessions, and its boundless wealth is becoming merely the plaything of five pampered and indolent democracies, too blind and selfish even to bind themselves together efficiently for their own defence, much less to impose their civilization and culture upon the great Dependencies.

And yet, for all its inherent weakness, this dropsical system stands between Germany and the sun, the only serious barrier (for France is none) to European hegemony and world dominion. It is like the dragon Fafnir, drowsing time away upon the Golden Hoard, too heavy of frame and impotent of mind to realize or apply the secret of power with which the Gods and Nibelungs have endowed it. And Germany is young Siegfried, advancing in the glory of omnipotent youth to Fafnir's destruction.

Ye have heard how in old times it was said, Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth; but I say unto you, Blessed are the valiant, for they shall make the earth their throne. And ye have heard men say, Blessed are the poor in spirit; but I say unto you, Blessed are the great in soul and the free in spirit, for they shall enter into Valhalla. And ye have heard men say, Blessed are the peacemakers; but I say unto you, Blessed are the war-makers, for they shall be called, if not the children of Jahve, the children of Odin, who is greater than Jahve.*

Whatever doubts may afflict the soul of older Germany, yet lingering amid the new life, this is the faith of the governing spirits in that Germany which the world has to confront to-day, the faith in itself of a sovereign and irresistible race, having in its thews the power of Nietzsche's primitive superman, "the magnificent blonde brute, avidly rampant for spoil and victory."

* The "New Imperative," from Professor Cramb's *Germany and England*, p. 117.

THE AUSTRO-SERVIAN DISPUTE

I. THE ASSASSINATION OF THE ARCHDUKE

THE actual event which gave the first impetus to the greatest war of history was the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, but it is obvious that the causes lie far deeper than that mysterious crime. Before considering them, however, it is necessary to inquire what the murder meant for Austria-Hungary. Quite apart from its effects upon foreign policy, his death exercised an infinitely greater influence upon the internal development of the Habsburg Monarchy than the tragic fate of Crown Prince Rudolf twenty-five years earlier. For Francis Ferdinand was one of the outstanding personalities in Europe—with the possible exception of William II, the most masterful member of any reigning house. As his uncle grew older, Francis Ferdinand had come more and more to represent in his own person a great political programme—the overthrow of the effete Dual System, which originally rested on the dominance of two races, the German and the Magyar, over the remaining eight, but which had ceased to “work” since the virtual collapse of the former in all save foreign policy; the regeneration of the Monarchy as a centralist state, on a wide if modified federalist basis; the vindication of the rights of the subject races of Hungary; a policy of internal administrative and linguistic reform; the solution of the Southern Slav question by unifying the Serbo-Croat race under Habsburg rule; and the consequent extension of Austrian influence and prestige in the Balkans. He thus incorporated the “Great Austrian” idea in its most ambitious form. Neither German nor Slav nor Latin, but merely “Habsburg” in feeling, he was, both by descent and by temperament, a typical blend of Habsburg and Bourbon. Though not in any sense

The Assassination of the Archduke

a pacifist, he was also not an irresponsible militarist. We have the authority of Dr. Danev, the Bulgarian ex-Premier, for the assertion that Francis Ferdinand used his influence during the first Balkan War strongly in favor of peace with Servia; and from another highly reliable source the present writer learnt the remark of the Archduke, dating from the same period, "An Emperor can risk an unsuccessful war, but a Crown Prince cannot." In short, Francis Ferdinand's policy was dynastic and imperialist, and yet in many respects democratic; at the least its fulfilment would have involved a vast step towards democratic ideals. It must be borne in mind that, despite many shortcomings, Austria has made great progress politically in recent years. The real obstacle has always lain in Hungary, where the Magyar oligarchy, aided by its Jewish parasites in the commercial and journalistic world, has monopolized all political power and exploited it in favor of a narrow racial hegemony.

The Serajevo murder is, and may remain, a hideous mystery. In a country so infested by secret police as Bosnia, Dalmatia and Croatia—where for years past treason-hunts have been the order of the day and indeed treasonable propaganda has often been artificially created to order—it is difficult to understand how so elaborate a plot could have eluded the vigilance of the authorities. It is an open secret that no precautions were taken for the protection of the Archduke and his wife, and without endorsing the widespread assertion that the two murderers, Cabrinovic and Princip, were Austrian *agents provocateurs*, we are at least entitled to suspect that they were left free to ply the trade of assassin. This is borne out by the well-authenticated remark made by the Archduke to his suite after the explosion of the bomb—"The fellow will get the Golden Cross of Merit for this"—a phrase which merely confirms equally authentic and significant remarks made by him on other occasions. Not less suspicious are the shameful anti-Serb excesses which followed the murder. No one who knows anything of Bosnia will pretend that the police and the military were alike powerless to prevent the wholesale sacking of houses and hotels on two successive days by the scum of the bazaar population. *Cui prodest?* Until the great war is over, further investigation will be impossible, and it may

The Austro-Servian Dispute

be that meanwhile all traces of the real truth will be effaced. For the moment it is enough to point out that despite the widespread horror excited by the outrage, the removal of Francis Ferdinand evoked in many influential circles in Vienna and Budapest feelings of thinly veiled relief. It is only fair to add that while some were influenced by fears for their political monopoly, others were persuaded that his accession to the throne might prove a grave embarrassment to the dynasty, owing to the serious and incurable disease with which he was threatened and which filled both himself and his wife with gloomy forebodings.

The immediate effect of the crime was to remove the one man capable of controlling a difficult situation and to bring the irresponsible elements to the front. The grief of the Army, the Clericals and even of large sections of the Slav population, who each in their own way had looked to Francis Ferdinand as their leader and saviour in the near future, was now skilfully exploited by the very people who secretly rejoiced at his disappearance from the scene. The Magyar oligarchy, which already had its back against the wall, realized that the moment for action had come. Its reactionary ideas of racial dominance found a leader—fanatical, iron-headed, personally equally brave and honest, but politically quite immune from all scruples—in Count Stephen Tisza, the Hungarian Premier.

The murder provided a splendid pretext for aggression. The psychological effect of so dastardly a deed was to unite many discordant elements in anger and revenge, and was well calculated to destroy Serbia's reviving reputation in Europe. Nor must one personal factor of the highest importance be overlooked—the effect of such a crime upon the German Emperor. The loss of an intimate and valued friend, the deadly blow struck at a closely allied Power, the peculiar infamy of an outrage upon one of the sacred royal caste, all contributed to make him impervious to argument on the subject, and it is probable that the friction which arose between the Courts of Berlin and Vienna in connection with the Archduke's funeral made William II all the more anxious to show what he regarded as unquestioning loyalty to his ally's cause. To this extent he may be said to have become the cat's-paw of Viennese intrigue, even if there are

The Crises of 1908 and 1912

grounds for believing that other considerations had their effect on his decision.

Vienna and Budapest were at one in attempting to fix the whole blame upon Serbia. The methods employed to convince Europe were the same as those of the Bosnian and Balkan crises of 1908 and 1912, and it is essential to recur briefly to those events.

II. THE CRISES OF 1908 AND 1912

WHEN, as a result of the Young Turkish revolution, Aehrenthal decided upon the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a case had to be made out to prove its necessity. In the summer of 1908, therefore—as a result of connivance between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna and the Hungarian Coalition Cabinet and its nominee Baron Rauch, as Ban of Croatia—wholesale arrests were made in Croatia, on charges of treasonable Pan-Serb propaganda; and in March, 1909, while the international crisis was at its height, the notorious High Treason Trial opened at Agram. Three weeks later the Austrian historian, Dr. Friedjung, published an article in the *Neue Freie Presse*, in which, on the basis of documents supplied to him by the Foreign Office, he formally accused a number of prominent politicians of the Serbo-Croat Coalition of being in the pay of Belgrade. It is an open secret that if war with Serbia had resulted, these leaders would have been summarily shot, and with them would probably have perished all evidence of the perfidious conspiracy directed against them. The crisis passed, and in due course the libel action brought by the Serbo-Croat leaders against Dr. Friedjung came up before a Viennese jury and developed into one of the most sensational political trials of modern times. It was conclusively proved that the “documents” supplied to Dr. Friedjung were impudent forgeries, deliberately concocted to ruin the movement for unity and the political parties which advocated it; and the methods of Count Aehrenthal and the officials of the Ballplatz were gravely compromised. Further inquiries, due mainly to the energy of the Czech philosopher and politician, Professor Masaryk, elicited the fact that the forgeries

The Austro-Servian Dispute

originated in the Austro-Hungarian Legation at Belgrade, which thus was exposed as the centre of the plot to discredit Serbia in the interests of Vienna. When Masaryk, in a scathing speech in the Austrian Delegation, openly denounced Count Forgách, the Minister in Belgrade, as "Count Avec,"* attempts were made to save the latter's reputation at the expense of subordinate members of the legation; but his moral responsibility for the forgeries was finally established by the tactical errors of Aehrenthal and his official press.†

These shameful methods, in every way worthy of the worst police-state traditions of Napoleon or Metternich, not only aroused the bitterest feeling throughout Southern Slav lands, but rendered friendly relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia almost impossible. When Count Berchtold succeeded Count Aehrenthal as Foreign Minister, there seemed to be some prospect of improvement, but though personally beyond reproach he was far too indolent and superficial to attempt any reform of the system which lay like a canker at the heart of Austrian foreign policy. Not merely did the old bureaucratic gang remain, but ere very long Forgách, who had in the meantime been transferred from Belgrade to the less electric atmosphere of Dresden, was actually summoned to the Ballplatz as one of the chief directors of Balkan policy. The anti-Servian campaign, hitherto in the hands of the two under-secretaries, Kania and Macchio, thus passed under the control of a still more pronounced enemy of the Southern Slavs. That there was no provocation on the part of Serbia it would be idle to assert. Indeed, it may be admitted that the authorities in Belgrade did little or nothing to repress those anarchic and unruly elements which are so much in evidence in all the Balkan capitals and which are systematically encouraged by a noisy gutter press. But such inaction is partly explained by the notorious part played in Belgrade by the secret agents of Vienna and Budapest. Nor should it be forgotten that all overtures from Belgrade were consistently and almost contemptuously rejected by the Ballplatz. At the height of the Balkan crisis three prominent Austrian politicians vis-

* An allusion to the notorious Russian *agent provocateur*, who was at once a member of the secret police and of the revolutionary organization.

† See a detailed account of this incident in Seton-Watson's *Southern Slav Question*, chapter xii.

ited Belgrade with the definite object of promoting an understanding, though without any formal authorization from Vienna; and one of them, who enjoys the confidence of almost all Southern Slavs, was empowered by the Servian Premier, Dr. Pasic, to put forward such far-reaching proposals on the part of the Servian government as would have revolutionized the whole relations of the Monarchy with its Balkan neighbours. This offer contained the promise not only of railway, road and bridge concessions throughout the new Servian territories to Austrian capitalists, but even the pledge of the "most favoured nation" clause in the next commercial treaty. Count Berchtold's attitude towards these advances, combined with the scandals of the Prochaska affair* at the same time, forced Pasic to the conclusion that friendship with Austria was impossible, and greatly strengthened the influence of that arch intriguer, M. Hartwig, the Russian Minister in Belgrade. The hostile attitude of the Monarchy towards Serbia during the first war was still further accentuated in the second war, when Bulgaria received large material aid from Vienna and was publicly encouraged in her aggressive attitude by a famous speech of the Hungarian Premier, Count Tisza. The keen hostility towards Serbia which inspired Count Forgách, Baron Macchio† and their colleagues in the Ballplatz, must be regarded as a very important factor in the situation, nor should their relations with the German Ambassador in Vienna—an active enemy of all Slav movements, whether in Russia or in Austria—be overlooked.

It is well, then, to realize the determining factors in Austria-Hungary after the removal of the "strong man." The old Emperor, peace-loving and possessed of unrivalled experience, but entirely devoid of all initiative and no longer

*The occupation of Prizren by the Servian army and the consequent isolation of Mr. Prochaska, the Austro-Hungarian Consul in that town, from his government, provided the latter with a convenient pretext for inaugurating an anti-Serb campaign and inflaming public opinion. For a fortnight the entire population of Vienna firmly believed that Prochaska had been shamefully mutilated by the Serb troops, and it was only when he arrived unhurt in Vienna that the legend fell to the ground. At the same time similar libels against Serbia were propagated in Vienna—notably a circumstantial account of how General Zivkovic had with his own hand murdered the Albanian leader Isa Boljetinac! In reality they never met.

†It is worth while noting that after Italy's declaration of neutrality Macchio was dispatched as ambassador to Rome, in a last despairing effort to drag Italy into active support of the Triple Alliance and incidentally to poison the minds of Italian statesmen against Serbia.

The Austro-Servian Dispute

able to check or hold back the forces working around him. The Court clique, consisting of his Chamberlain, Prince Montenuovo, his aide-de-camp, Count Paar—both open enemies of the late Duchess of Hohenberg—and certain female influences, ringing him round as by a Chinese wall of preconceived ideas. Konrad von Hoetzendorf, an able soldier, but a man without a trace of judgment, balance or statesmanship, ready to stake all on a gambler's throw.* The Foreign Office clique, with its sinister record, utterly shortsighted and uninspired. The German Ambassador, Tschirschky, with all the supporters he could muster in the financial and journalistic world. Count Stürgkh, the Austrian Premier, whose complete insignificance rendered the task of the extremists easier. Count Tisza, the Hungarian Premier, a Calvinist fanatic ready to die in the last ditch for an ideal as perverted and anachronous as that which inspired Paul Kruger.

III. THE RACE ISSUE

WHAT is it, then, that has rendered friendship between Austria-Hungary and Servia impossible. The obstacle is at once economic and national. Let us deal with the former issue first. Servia, as an inland country, found her economic independence hampered and threatened at every turn by her powerful neighbour, while on the other hand the provinces of Dalmatia and Bosnia, which form geographically the seaboard of Servia and are inhabited by men of her own race, are in alien hands. Her efforts at economic emancipation under King Peter led to the so-called "Pig War" against the Monarchy; but though unexpectedly successful in finding new markets, the Serb peasants felt the pinch of such a struggle and repaid it in an increased hatred of Austria-Hungary. At this point came the Young Turkish Revolution and the consequent annexation of Bosnia by

* As long ago as December, 1912, after the Servian victories in the first Balkan war, Konrad took steps to ascertain the opinion of an observer whom he thought to be competent, upon the expediency of an immediate attack upon both Servia and Russia. Simultaneously the Austro-Hungarian War Office opened a list for the registration of correspondents of foreign newspapers who would be allowed to follow the Austrian army in the intended war against Russia.

The Race Issue

Aehrenthal. Of course it had long been obvious to external observers that in 1878 Austria-Hungary had come to stay, and that her effective administration would never again be superseded by the phantom Turkish suzerainty. Yet that act, though only technically a breach of international law, touched the whole Serb race to the quick and led to violent outbursts of impotent fury. For some months it seemed as though Serbia and Montenegro were bent upon staking their very existence upon war with the Monarchy. Aehrenthal, of course, adhered stubbornly to the policy of annexation. Russia, after encouraging the sister States in their diplomatic resistance, abandoned them to their fate when Germany stepped forth in "shining armour" to support her ally. Nothing was left for them but a humiliating submission, embodied in the document which Viennese diplomacy has made a convenient point of departure for the Austrian Note to Serbia.*

This reverse had a chastening effect upon Serbia and restored her to a sense of hard realities. From that day dates the rapid renaissance of her national spirit, and of its most practical form of expression, the Servian army. No one who visited Belgrade in 1908-9 and returned in 1912-3 could fail to wonder at the transformation. The two Balkan wars revealed Serbia to the outside world as a real military power, revealed, too, the latent possibilities of the Serb race. Expansion on natural lines to the west having been artificially prevented, Serbia now had to look for other exits, and the first result of her victories over the Turks was her occupation of Northern Albania and of the very inferior but tolerable ports of Durazzo and Medua. Berchtold was too shortsighted to realize that for reasons of physical geography these harbours could never become naval bases, that their mountainous hinterland was likely to be a source of weakness to the conquerors, and that the moment had arrived for finally tempting the Serbs into the Austrian sphere of influence by the bait of generous commercial concessions through Bosnia and Dalmatia. Turning a deaf ear to those who urged such a policy upon him, he imposed an absolute veto upon Servian expansion on the Adriatic and devoted himself to causing friction among the allies. Serbia thus

* See White Paper, No. 4.

The Austro-Servian Dispute

had no alternative save to seek her economic outlet down the valley of the Vardar, and in so doing she came into violent conflict with Bulgarian aspirations in Macedonia. To the Ballplatz a war between the allies was the first condition to that Austrian advance on Salonica which still remained the ideal of an influential section of Austrian and Hungarian opinion.

But the issues involved lie far deeper than the quarrel between Belgrade and Vienna or Budapest. The unity of a race of eleven millions is at stake—the future of all the wide lands that lie between Villach and Monastir, between Neusatz and Cattaro. The subjoined table shows existing political subdivisions and gives some idea of the untenable situation of the Southern Slavs.

	Croate	Serb	Sloven	Serbo-Croat-Moslem
1. Under Austria:				
(a) Dalmatia . .	600,000	100,000	—	—
(b) Istria . . .	200,000	—	100,000	—
(c) Carniola } Carinthia }	—	—	1,200,000	—
2. Under Hungary				
(a) Croatia-Slavonia	1,750,000	650,000	—	—
(b) Banat, and W. Counties . .	200,000	450,000	100,000	—
3. Under Austria-Hungary jointly				
Bosnia-Herzegovina	450,000	850,000	—	600,000
4. Independent Servia .	—	3,250,000	—	—
5. Independent Montenegro	—	350,000	—	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,200,000	5,650,000	1,400,000	600,000
United total . .	10,850,000			

While Servia, released by the hideous tragedy of 1903 from the corrupt and irresponsible yoke of the Obrenovitch, entered upon a new era under a rival dynasty, a movement of almost equal importance was taking place among her kinsmen across the Save and Drina. In 1905 the scattered opposition parties of Croatia combined into the so-called Croato-Serb Coalition, and at the conferences of Fiume and Zara adopted a programme of constructive reform as the basis of joint political action on the part of both races.

The Race Issue

The immediate result was that the party which for the previous twenty years had ruled Croatia in the interests of Budapest by the aid of every imaginable corruption and violence, at once lost its majority and collapsed. After a brief reconciliation with the Magyars, the Croato-Serb Coalition was driven once more into opposition; but nothing could now check the growing perception that Croat and Serb are one race, divided only by differences which the modern world no longer regards as the excuse for a family feud. To check this movement for unity, Vienna and Budapest resorted to the systematic persecution of the Serbs of Croatia. Wholesale arrests and charges of treason led up to the monster trial at Agram, which dragged on for seven months amid scandals worthy of the days of Judge Jeffreys. The Diet ceased to meet, the constitution of Croatia was in abeyance, the elections were characterized by corruption and violence such as eclipsed even the infamous Hungarian elections of 1910; the press and the political leaders were singled out for special acts of persecution and intimidation. These tactics seemed to have reached their height in the Friedjung trial (December, 1909), to which reference has been made above, and its scandals led to the fall of Baron Rauch, who, as Ban of Croatia, has been responsible for many of the worst abuses. But there was merely a change of person, not a change of system, and ere long the friction between Magyar and Southern Slav was as acute as ever. Serbo-Croat unity was only cemented by persecution, and the movement soon extended to the kindred Slovenes and struck root even among the most confirmed Clericals. In the spring of 1912 the conflict between Agram and Budapest culminated in the abolition of the Croatian constitution, in the appointment of an unscrupulous official as dictator, and a few months later in the suspension of the charter of the Serb Orthodox Church. From an Austrian point of view nothing could have been more unfortunate. For close on the heels of these crying illegalities and the lively demonstrations and unrest which they evoked, came the Balkan war, the crushing victories of the allies over Turkey, the resurrection of the lost Servian empire, the long-deferred revenge for the defeat of Kosovo. The Southern Slav provinces of the Monarchy were carried

The Austro-Servian Dispute

off their feet by a wave of almost ecstatic enthusiasm for the Balkan League, and an almost impossible situation was reached when the Austro-Hungarian Government placed itself in violent conflict with Servia, vetoed her expansion to the Adriatic, insisted upon the creation of an independent Albania and mobilized to enforce her openly Serbophobe policy. Even during Cuvaj's regime in Croatia, in other words in the spring preceding the war, the movement of national protest had spread far beyond the classes which usually control such movements. Its infection had spread to the schools, and on one occasion practically every boy and girl above the age of fourteen in the schools of Croatia, Bosnia and Dalmatia had indulged in a spontaneous and well-organized political strike! On such soil the Balkan war struck deep root, and in one short year the Southern Slav youth was irretrievably lost for Austria. The moderate politicians lost all hold upon the younger generation: the students simply ignored them and went their own way. Many dreamt of revolution, all alike looked to Servia as the daystar of national liberty. Such was the *milieu* out of which came the group of youthful fanatics whose act of terrorism has set Europe in a blaze. Those whose sympathy for the Italian Risorgimento is not damped by the methods of the Carbonari or of Mazzini's disciples, who do not despair of Russian freedom because its cause has been sustained by acts of terrorism, will not condemn a whole nation for the crimes of a few raw and unbalanced strip-lings. The hideous irony of it all is that Francis Ferdinand was the one man capable of righting the desperate internal situation; the one man in high quarters who was resolutely opposed to Magyar policy towards the Hungarian nationalities and towards Croatia, and resolved to attempt some drastic solution of the Southern Slav problem, as soon as fate should grant him the opportunity.

To sum up, it cannot be too strongly affirmed that the incentive to the crime came from within the Monarchy, from the intolerable misrule of the Magyars, aggravated by Viennese connivance. While it is true to say that the existence of an independent Servia kindled the imagination of the Serbs and Croats within the Monarchy and rendered them restless under galling political conditions, and that

The Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum

Belgrade, like all other Balkan capitals, contains anarchial and revolutionary elements eager to make mischief across the frontiers, there are, on the other hand, no grounds whatever for supposing that official Servia had any connection with the crime. Everything points to the opposite conclusion, for the murder occurred at a moment when Servia was specially in need of peace. The Concordat with the Vatican had only been signed a week before; the negotiations regarding the Orient railway had reached a critical stage; above all the customs and military union between Servia and Montenegro was on the point of being proclaimed and there was even a prospect of a final arrangement regarding the mutual relations of the Karageorgevitch and Petrovitch dynasties. In other words, in the absence of proof the presumption would be in favour of aggression from Vienna to prevent Servian consolidation, rather than from Belgrade in favour of a criminal provocation of the Habsburg Monarchy.

The one mistake made by Servia was her omission to offer a thorough inquiry, without waiting for any such suggestion from Vienna; and there is reason to believe that this step was prevented by M. Hartwig, whose whole policy had been devoted to embittering still further the relations of Servia and the Monarchy. His sudden death within a fortnight of the murder, during an official call upon his Austro-Hungarian colleague, seemed to many observers a signal example of retributory justice. In this connection, however, it is right to point out that as in Teheran so in Belgrade M. Hartwig often far outran the instructions or intentions of his Government, and that the appointment of Prince Gregory Trubetzkoi, the gifted exponent of Russian foreign policy,* as his successor at the Russian Legation in Belgrade, was a markedly conciliatory act on the part of St. Petersburg.

IV. THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ULTIMATUM

THE Austro-Hungarian Note to Servia is susceptible of only one interpretation; it was deliberately couched in such terms as to be unacceptable. No possible loophole

* See his *Russland als Grossmacht*, trans. by Josef Melnik, Stuttgart, 1913.

The Austro-Servian Dispute

was left by which Servia could save her self-respect or prestige. And yet the impossible happened, and Servia accepted the most galling of the demands made upon her, merely making certain reservations upon two out of the ten chief points, without expressly rejecting even them. Not content with this humiliating submission, the Servian Government three days later, through the medium of its representative in Rome, informed the Italian Foreign Minister that it was actually prepared to accept the whole Note, if only "some explanation were given regarding the mode in which Austrian agents would require to intervene," and even went so far as to offer to accept these explanations from a third party, if Austria-Hungary was not disposed to give them to Servia direct.* The best proof, however, of Servia's conciliatory attitude lies in her offer to submit any points not fully met by her reply to the decision of the Hague Tribunal, where there would obviously have been little sympathy for terrorist conspiracies, or to that of the Powers who had dictated the terms of her surrender to Austria-Hungary in March, 1909.†

That Austria-Hungary was not satisfied with so abject a surrender, shows that war had been resolved upon from the first. The best proof of this is the inclusion of a time limit of forty-eight hours, a step which paralysed all efforts towards peace and was directly responsible for the catastrophe which has overtaken Europe. It is almost impossible to resist the conclusion that Berlin shares with Vienna the responsibility for this time limit; and this is further strengthened by the frank admission of the *German White Paper*, that Germany "gave Austria an entirely free hand against Servia."‡ The German contention that Austria-Hungary could not be summoned before a European tribunal, was probably put forward in perfect good faith by Berlin: but it shows a failure to reckon with the facts of the situation, since on the one hand it ignored the all im-

* White Paper, No. 64.

† White Paper, No. 39.

‡ The German White Paper was not like the English one, a complete collection of the dispatches which passed during the negotiations, but a statement of Germany policy with a few supporting documents. It was laid before the Reichstag on August 4.

portant precedent of the Dogger Bank,* and on the other hand gave in effect a free hand to Count Forgách and his methods. The Agram and Friedjung trials† and the scandals connected with the names of Nastic, Vasic and Forgách, provide the real explanation why Austria-Hungary was disinclined to go to the Hague, and when the war is over, other still weightier reasons will probably transpire. The dossier appended to the Note and submitted as its justification to the representatives of the Great Powers, was, to say the least, suspect, since it rested upon a one-sided and secret investigation conducted in the prison of Serajevo. The attitude of the outside world could not have been better summed up than by Sir Edward Grey in the opening document of his memorable White Paper, in which he assumed that the Austrian Government "would not do anything until they had first disclosed to the public their case against Servia, founded presumably upon what they had discovered *at the trial*." But, at this time, there had, as a matter of fact, been no trial at all! In other words, the dossier, even if it had not passed through the office of Count Forgách, was not evidence in any western sense of the word.

The ostensible aim of Austria-Hungary is a "punitive expedition" against a turbulent and unprincipled little neighbour, and to those ignorant of her internal racial conditions this explanation may seem plausible enough. But the real issues at stake are the continuance of the effete Dual System, which had so long blocked the path of every real reform in the Monarchy; the maintenance of the Magyar racial hegemony over the non-Magyar races of Hungary, the perpetuation of the political and economic bondage of the Southern Slavs. This attempt on the part of a narrow and reactionary clique to bolster up an impossible *status quo* and hold back the clock of history, can only end in moral

* It will be remembered that the Russian Baltic Fleet fired on some British trawlers in the North Sea at the outset of its voyage to the Far East during the Russo-Japanese war. The incident brought the two countries to the verge of war, but was satisfactorily disposed of by the agreement of the two Powers to submit their differences to the Hague Tribunal.

† At the Friedjung Trial Dr. Spalajkovic, in the name of the Servian Government, formally offered to submit the whole case to the Hague Tribunal. The anxiety and disfavour with which this proposal was greeted in Vienna was very marked, and betrayed itself especially in the attitude of the presiding judge and of the semi-official inspired press.

and political bankruptcy, but its authors seem determined to drag down Europe in their fall. More than anyone in Europe—more even than the rival war parties in Berlin, Petersburg and Vienna—the Magyar oligarchy is directly responsible for this war; for it is their oppressive treatment of the nationalities and above all their misgovernment of Croatia, reacting upon Bosnia and Dalmatia, which has kept the Southern Slav question as an open sore on the face of Europe and permanently embroiled the Monarchy with the independent Serb states. Just as the German people's perfectly comprehensible dread of Russia is being exploited by the Prussian military chiefs, so the unhappy peoples of Austria-Hungary are being exploited in favour of a system which runs directly counter to the interests and aspirations of the majority among them.

For a moment it seemed as though Austro-Russian complications might be averted by the assurances given by Austria-Hungary in Paris, that the integrity of Servia would be respected.* But to those who knew enough to look below the surface it was obvious that such a pledge, even if given in all honesty, was almost worthless. The Servians were prepared to fight to the last man in defence of their independence, and Austrian success would have found the sister kingdoms in a condition in which the victors would have had no choice but annexation. Count Mensdorff's eager assurance (No. 137) that Austria-Hungary had no idea of re-occupying the Sandjak, was either naïve or perfidious; for our Foreign Office can hardly have been ignorant of the notorious facts that the Austrian General Staff had long ago decided that the Sandjak, as a line of strategic advance, was worthless by comparison with the Morava valley, and that any fresh advance into the Sandjak would infringe the Balkan understanding between Austria-Hungary and Italy. There are many indications that the real Austrian objective was Salonica.†

* A prime reason of the evacuation of the Sandjak in 1908 was Italy's contention that the annexation of Bosnia altered the Balkan *status quo* to her disadvantage. When during the first Balkan war Italy's attitude in the Albanian question was regarded by Servia as unfriendly, the Italian Minister in Belgrade made repeated efforts to convince the Servian Government that Italy's action with regard to the Sandjak had been inspired by friendly consideration for Servia and Montenegro.

† See White Paper, No. 19 (Sir R. Rodd's dispatch of July 25) and No. 82 (Mr. Beaumont's of July 29).

The Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum

In time of peace there was always some hope, despite the ever recurring errors of Viennese and Magyar diplomacy, that the Southern Slav question might be solved peacefully within the Habsburg Monarchy. But with the death of the Archduke that hope also died. The question immediately assumed European importance, just as it had already done in 1908 and in 1912. Unfortunately the statesmen of Vienna, Budapest and Berlin, while basing their case upon the Servian Note of March, 1909 (acknowledging the situation of Bosnia to be no concern of hers), ignored the fact that this note was extracted from Servia, and its phraseology determined, by joint action on the part of the Powers, and persistently argued that the same question in its new form was a matter which concerned no one in Europe save Servia and Austria-Hungary. This fatal attitude, based on a complete misreading of past history and on a failure to comprehend the point of view of ally and opponent alike, was adhered to despite repeated warnings from St. Petersburg, London and other capitals.* The result is universal war.

On July 16 Count Tisza affirmed in the Hungarian Parliament that the relations of the Monarchy with Servia must be "cleared up," and subsequent events have revealed the drift of his ideas. To-day Britain may well adopt his phrase and insist that among many other results of this horrible war, the Southern Slav question shall be definitely cleared up, but in accordance with the wishes, not of the Magyar oligarchy, but of the Serbo-Croat race. The action of the allied French and British fleets upon the Adriatic, and their co-operation with the Montenegrin and Servian armies, should ere long place us in a position to assure such a solution.

VII. STATE AND PEOPLE

THE name of Nietzsche is at present so closely associated with this aggressive national faith that a prominent bookseller in London advertises a list of works and pamphlets upon "The Euro-Nietzschean War." The prophet of the superman doubtless lends himself to misinterpretation of this crude and sweeping kind. But

* Cf. White Paper, Nos. 3, 10, 17, 48, 101, etc.

The Austro-Servian Dispute

Nietzsche's countrymen have in truth had no keener or more unsparing critic than the wild seer who is supposed, even by many of themselves, to have preached and justified their present ideals. His own preoccupation was not with physical but with spiritual wars; and, so far from esteeming the culture of modern Germany, he denounced it as the arch-enemy of that new aristocracy of character and intellect which he foreshadowed in visions of the superman. He was wont to call himself, above all things, a "good European," for his ideal of culture transcended national boundaries and looked only to the production of the highest human type. He must turn in his grave at the claims which German culture is parading with such fierce and unanimous conviction to-day.

Nietzsche's true creed, or glimpses of a creed, need not detain us here; but his criticism of modern Germany will illustrate better than anything else the fundamental wrongness of the national ideals against which England has drawn the sword. There is no hatred of Germany in England comparable to the hatred of England in Germany. On the contrary, most Englishmen are conscious of some affinity to the German race, and they trace their present antagonism only to the fact that the modern ideals of Germany are contrary to the true spirit of Germany in the past. Kin to the English stock, and devotees of self-government in their earliest time, the German people are now the protagonists of reaction towards the twin doctrines of subordination and ascendancy—subordinate themselves to an all-righteous and omnipotent State, and vowed to win ascendancy for that State over all other peoples. Their culture is, in fact, a form of enslavement to the State—not only menacing, as it seems to Englishmen, the cause of freedom everywhere, but contrary to the German genius itself. It is vain for foreigners to press an indictment of this kind, but the German people may read it, clause by clause, in Nietzsche's penetrating criticism of the "Culture State." He was teaching in a German university when his ideas began to take shape; he had served in the German army; he had been raised in German schools. Englishmen may, therefore, take his testimony as good foundation for their belief that a momentous conflict of ideals is the true reason of

this war *à outrance* between the two great branches of the Teutonic race.

Nietzsche's first criticism of his country's ideals was delivered at Bâle in a series of lectures on the future of its educational institutions. The date was 1873, only two years after the creation of the German Empire; but even then he put his finger unerringly upon the main issue at stake. Was education, the great civilizing force, to be the servant of humanity or merely a German instrument? In principle, he declared, it should be the former; but it was the latter in fact, because the German system compelled it "to renounce its highest and most independent claims in order to subordinate itself to the service of the State." In a striking picture, he compared the dissemination of culture under the German State to a reeling, torch-lit and self-absorbed procession of worshippers, intoxicated by the mysteries of some pagan cult:

The State assumes the attitude of a mystagogue of culture, and, whilst it promotes its own ends, it obliges every one of its servants not to appear in its presence without the torch of universal State education in his hands, by the flickering light of which he may recognize the State as the highest goal, as the reward of all his strivings after education.*

The origin of this subjugation of culture by the State may no doubt be traced, as Nietzsche himself points out, to the period of the War of Liberation, when Prussia called upon all her great intellectual resources to build the State anew and deliver it from the dominance of French arms. Hegel's panegyric of the State as "an absolutely complete ethical organism, the be-all and end-all of every one's education,"† has certainly drawn much of its power over German thought from the experience and wonderful achievement of that period of national regeneration. But throughout the first half of the nineteenth century a more liberal view of the State might easily have overcome the Prussian cult. Such a view struggled hard for mastery during the critical twenty years which preceded Bismarck's entry into office as Prussian Minister-President, and the great reaction

* *The Future of our Educational Institutions* (Vol. III, Complete English Edition), p. 86.

† *Ibid.*, p. 90.

The Austro-Servian Dispute

dates definitely from the dazzling successes of the German people under his iron leadership in 1866 and 1870. When the present Emperor ascended the throne, the last hope of a Liberal Germany faded into air. The only question that remained open was whether the Prussian system would force the latent spirit of liberalism into revolt within the Empire itself before it embroiled the Empire with the outer world.

Unhappily, as Nietzsche so clearly saw, the State was able to control the very well-springs of education and to use them solely for its own ends. The "militarism" which England denounces in Germany is not the existence of a great army of conscript soldiers, animated with a splendid spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice. All the great European Powers, except England, possess such armies. France, among the great nations, Switzerland, among the smaller ones, call a larger proportion of their subjects to the colours every year than Germany; yet neither France nor Switzerland is a "militarist" State. The danger of "militarism" arises only when the animating purpose and spirit of the army becomes also the animating purpose and spirit of the State; and this is only possible when every department of government and of national life, including higher education itself, lies under the dominance of governors with whom the army comes first and the nation afterwards. It is significant that, when the Emperor William ascended the throne, his proclamation to his people followed three days after his proclamation to the army. The people, it seemed existed for the army; the army and himself were the State.

One recent episode, the affair at Zabern in 1913, will illustrate the result. Zabern, the old French Saverigne, is a little garrison-town in Alsace. It seems that in December, 1913, the local Alsatians—Alsations are nowhere patient of German government—had shown what was regarded as some lack of respect for the garrison troops. A young Prussian lieutenant thereupon offered a reward of ten marks to any soldier who, if insulted by a native of the town, struck the offender and brought him into barracks. In the harangue he used an insulting term to denote Alsatians; and it is worth observing, in view of what followed, that the definition of what constituted an insult was left entirely to the troops. The nature and language of Lieutenant von

State and People

Forstner's address becoming known, there was an unfriendly demonstration outside the officers' mess, which was dispersed by soldiers with loaded rifles. The lieutenant then went out shopping, escorted by four soldiers with fixed bayonets. In the evening the popular excitement increased; whereupon the Colonel of the Regiment proclaimed martial law and placed machine-guns in the streets. The scene which followed is thus described in the calm pages of the *Annual Register*:

A fireman who left his supper when he heard the drums of the regiment was arrested at his door; the Judge and Counsel of the Civil Court, which had just risen, were also arrested as they were leaving the Court. The Judge was allowed to go home, but all the others (twenty-seven in number) spent the night in the cellars of the barracks, and were only liberated the next day when they were brought before the Judge for trial. . . . A further aggravation of the scandal was the arrest of a man and his wife at Metz, because the wife laughed at a passing patrol, and the wounding by Lieutenant Forstner of a lame cobbler, who with other workmen was alleged to have insulted him by "contemptuous cries," though the Burgomaster asserted it was only some children who had jeered.*

Judicial proceedings followed, in which it was proved that "when warned that his unprovoked incitement of the population was likely to lead to bloodshed," Colonel von Reuter, who commanded von Forstner's regiment, had said that "bloodshed would be a good thing," and that civilians had been arrested for "intending to laugh."† The Colonel was finally acquitted on the ground that "he did not know that he had acted illegally." He himself based his action on a Prussian Cabinet Order of the year 1820.

It must not be supposed that this example of military zeal was universally approved in Germany. It aroused a storm of controversy, and the Reichstag actually passed a resolution by 293 votes to 54 declaring that it was dissatisfied with the Chancellor's rather half-hearted defence of the conduct of the garrison. But the protest of the Reichstag and the more independent sections of the public was entirely ineffectual. The Crown Prince had telegraphed to Colonel von Reuter during his trial, exhorting

* *The Annual Register*, 1913, p. 319.

† See a good account of the episode in *What is Wrong with Germany*, by the careful author of *The Evolution of Modern Germany*.

The Austro-Servian Dispute

him ("immer feste darau") to "stick to it"; and General von Falkenhayn, the Prussian Minister of War, had declared in the Reichstag that "what they had to deal with was not the degree of a lieutenant's offence, but *a determined attempt by Press agitation and abuse to exercise an unlawful influence upon the decision of the authorities.*" Dr. Jagow, the Police President at Berlin, afterwards supported these views of the matter by explaining in the *Kreuz Zeitung* that "*military exercises are acts of sovereignty, and, if obstacles are placed in the way of their performance, the obstacles must be removed in the execution of this act of sovereignty.*" Dr. Jagow may be supposed, in virtue of the office he holds, not to express public opinion upon matters of State without some idea whether or not those opinions are agreeable to the Government. When the potter had died down, his theory that "military exercises"—such as running lame cobblers through the body and shopping with fixed bayonets—"are acts of sovereignty" apparently held the field, so far as official Germany was concerned. The very mild sentence of forty-three days' detention passed on Lieutenant von Forstner was quashed by a higher military Court, and Colonel von Reuter was decorated with a Prussian Order at the beginning of the new year. It would hardly have been possible to demonstrate more clearly that in the eyes of the German Government there is one law for the army and another for civilians, and that civil must yield to military rights whenever they conflict.

It has become common to denounce the German military system for all this sinister and reactionary tendency in the German "Culture-State"; but the root of the evil is not really to be found in the mess-room or the barracks, however greatly they may seem to encroach upon the elementary liberties of civil life. The root of the evil, rightly traced, is in the schools and universities, which have been degraded by the State into an instrument for so diffusing military ideals and standards throughout the atmosphere of German life, that they now dominate all the normal processes of German thought. Professor Mommsen, the great historian, once bid the nation take heed "lest in this State, which has been at once a power in arms and a power in intelligence, the intelligence should vanish and nothing but

State and People

the pure military State remain.”* There has always been in Germany a liberal and ideal strain which has struggled steadfastly against the repression and degradation of culture by the narrow materialism of the Prussian autocracy. It showed itself in the outburst of criticism upon the Zabern incident; and it has been expressed with growing courage by a section of the literary world, which seemed until the outbreak of war to be increasing its influence. But the State has wielded so tremendous a power over national life that this reforming school has fought against impossible odds. Employment and promotion, not merely in the Government services, which absorb a very large proportion of the educated class, but in the world of education itself, even to the professional chairs, have been made to depend entirely upon official favour; and official favour has naturally been reserved for those who further official purposes. Education and culture have, in consequence, been poisoned at the springs, and only very courageous and independent minds have escaped the contagion of the doctrine that the State is “the be-all and end-all of every one’s education,” the arbiter of conscience no less than of thought. For forty years, moreover, the State has been an autocratic and military tyranny; its supreme and all-sufficient expression is the Emperor, the Army and the Fleet. The national type of culture has thus been depressed to the moral and intellectual standards of the Zabern garrison. Preferment and encouragement, in the world of higher thought as elsewhere, has depended upon subservience to this cult. The very citadel of German thought has been invaded by the soul-destroying ways of Court sycophancy and Byzantinism, and men of independent mind have been steadily prevented from exercising their proper influence on State policy and the direction of national ideas. Almost the last words which Nietzsche wrote were, like his first, devoted to this theme:

Not only have the Germans entirely lost the *breadth of vision* which enables one to grasp the course of culture and the values of culture; not only are they one and all political (or Church) puppets; but they have actually *put a ban upon* this very breadth of vision. A man must first and foremost be “German,” he must belong to “*the race*”; then only can he pass judgment upon all values and lack of values in history, then only can he establish them. To be German is

* Quoted in *What is Wrong with Germany*, p. 116.

The Austro-Servian Dispute

in itself an argument; *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* is a principle; the Germans stand for "the moral order of the universe" in history. Compared with the Roman Empire, they are the upholders of freedom; compared with the eighteenth century, they are the restorers of morality, of the Categorical Imperative. There is such a thing as the writing of history according to the lights of Imperial Germany. There is, I fear, anti-Semitic history. There is also history written with an eye to the Court, and Herr von Treitschke is not ashamed of himself.*

Does not this hit off the keynote of every defence of German policy in the present war?

The part played by every country in world politics is determined, not only by its interests, but by the spirit of its institutions. The much belauded culture which Germany is striving to impose upon the world is the product of a military State which has not merely conscribed its subject's bodies—as every State must claim the right to do—but has also conscribed their minds. The German State has exalted its interest as the only law; and to this law it appeals, not only over the individual conscience and liberty of its own subjects, but over the moral conventions and ideas by which all civilized States are striving to regulate the crude arbitrament of force. It has standardized German culture as a State product for its own material ends, and German culture has become its body-slave, "The State—what is that?", cries Zarathustra in Nietzsche's favourite work:

The State is called the coldest of cold monsters. And coldly it lieth. And this lie creepeth out of its mouth: "I, the State, am the people." . . .

"On earth there is nothing greater than I: God's regulating finger am I," thus the monster howleth. And not only those with long ears and short sight fall upon their knees. . . .

The new idol would fain surround itself with heroes and honest men. It liketh to sun itself in the sunshine of good consciences—the cold monster!

It will give you anything if you adore it, the new idol; thus it buyeth for itself the splendour of your virtue and the glance of your proud eyes. . . .

What I call the State is where all are poison-drinkers, the good and the evil alike.

This is the poison which has twisted the features of German culture and clouded its eyes, and made of it a

* *Ecce Homo*, (Vol. XVII, Complete English Edition), pp. 123-4.

State and People

by-word among all peoples of free mind. *It will give you anything if you adore it, the new idol; thus it buyeth for itself the splendour of your virtue and the glance of your proud eyes.* What is that but the old curse of Byzantinism, infecting the thought and conscience of the noblest with the taint of slavery, the more insidious because disguised as personal sacrifice to a lofty and transfiguring idea? The Prussian system of State worship, which exalts the monarch as a hierarch mediating between God and the people of his choice, is nothing but the secular cult of absolutism and theocracy in a new and more subtle guise; and the struggle against it is England's historic struggle against the principle of blind obedience to authority in human affairs—the struggle between free life and slave life, between all that goes with representative government and all that goes with the divine right of kings. It is strange to reflect, now that the issue is so plain, how clearly it was stated many years ago by the German philosopher most generally acclaimed as the prophet of modern German ideas.

The victory of England and France will end the menace of this reaction from the Western world, but in Germany itself the transformation can only come from within. To speak of "crushing German militarism" by force of arms is to adopt the very fallacy against which we are fighting, that culture can be imposed by war. The hope of freedom in Germany rests not on any such insubstantial ground, but on the reasonable assurance that, if the successes of the Prussian system are once reversed, the truer mind of Germany, which is not dead but overlaid, will recover its proper influence upon the German State. Nietzsche himself—to quote him for the last time—declared again and again that the true German spirit was at variance with the modern claim of the German State to arrogate all culture to its own use:

Hiddenly or openly [he wrote in 1873] this purpose of the State is at war with the real German spirit and the education derived therefrom; . . . with that spirit which speaks to us so wondrously from the inner heart of the German Reformation, German music and German philosophy, and which, like a noble exile, is regarded with such indifference and scorn by the luxurious education afforded by the State.*

* *The Future of Our Educational Institutions*, p. 89.

The Austro-Servian Dispute

Solitary though the spirit of idealist Germany be, and though, as Nietzsche says: "the censer of pseudo-culture be swung far away from it," amid the acclamation of a drugged and deluded host of teachers, historians and seers, there is still alive in Germany the strain which made the greatness of her people in the past. Thus none who knows and loves the older Germany of history will not pray that it may pass through its present ordeal to some political system in which the German spirit may express itself with freedom and security from foreign menace, and without menace on its part to the rest of the world. Though it failed to achieve the greatest of its political aims till Bismarck modelled it with his iron hand, the high character built up by Fichte's teaching may even yet come more truly to its own; and with it there may rise again the Germany of true popular ideals, which almost found itself in 1848 and the following years, and might have been revived by the Emperor Frederick, had he been spared for a longer reign. The Emperor Frederick's spirit seems to be lost in the present scions of the Hohenzollern line; but there are signs that *Realpolitik* with its material values, its abnegation of conscience, its cult of force, is not entirely satisfactory to the soul of the German race, even though its Prussian exponents have hitherto so greatly prevailed.

One is often pained and overcome with longing [writes a modern German professor], as one thinks of the German of a hundred years ago. He was poor, he was impotent, he was despised, ridiculed and defrauded. He was the uncomplaining slave of others; his fields were their battleground, and the goods which he had inherited from his fathers were trodden underfoot and dispersed. He never troubled when the riches of the outside world were divided without regard for him. He sat in his bare little room high under the roof, in simple coat and clumsy shoes; but his heart was full of sweet dreams, and uplifted by the chords of Beethoven to a rapture which threatened to rend his breast. He wept with Werther and Jean Paul in joyous pain, he smiled with the childish innocence of his naïve poets, the happiness of his longing consumed him, and as he listened to Schubert's song his soul became one with the soul of the universe. Let us think no more of it—it is useless.*

His fields were their battleground. If only the memory of her own past had stayed the Germany which is trampling Belgium to-day!

* *Der Kaiser und die Zukunft des deutschen Volks*, by G. Fuchs, pp. 70-71—quoted from *The Evolution of Modern Germany*, pp. 5-6.

State and People

The idyllic picture has, of course, another side. It was a noble Germany indeed, but with petty weaknesses which sapped its strength of soul. If German culture was to have its due, it needed some stronger political frame than an association of small States too jealous of each other to safeguard their common interests and ideals. But Prussian State-culture is too violent a reaction from those ineffectual times, too utter a denial of the aims and principles which animate the great progressive nations of the world, to succeed and endure; and perhaps, if its power can be broken by the ordeal which it has now invoked, there will emerge from the storm a German State in which the idealism of the past will resume its broken sway and arrest the prostitution of German minds to dreams of material dominion by the ruthless cult of war.

